

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for May 6, 2020

Present: George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskén, Steve Flanders, Pete Griggs, Doug Hardy, Nick Krembs, Jane Lamasurier, John McCormick, Bridge McDowell, Elena Mihaly, Sean Ogle, Gerry Plummer, Liz Russell, Brie Swenson (Host for this Zoom meeting)

Bridge McDowell recently cleared a downed tree in the middle section of the Blue Ribbon Trail. Gerry Plummer noted that some clearing remains to be done on the Connector Trail. Bob Fiskén reported that the northern end of the Hazen trail is clear, but it would be good to remove an overhanging limb which is presently securely suspended. Sean Ogle said that he would be doing clearing on the Rosemary Rieser Trail. Jim Faughnan reported on two eroded sections of the lower Ballard Trail near Ballard Park; Cost for the quantity of fill and gravel needed to repair those sections might be as much as \$1000 or more.

The committee is to hold a work session on the Converse Loop of the Ballard Trail on Saturday May 9. Committee members bringing chain saws are to park along Bragg Hill Road, while others will meet at 9 AM in the pulloff on Beaver Meadow Road near Tucker Hill Road. Following present public health guidelines, there is to be no carpooling, facial covers and gloves worn, social distance maintained, and tools not freely shared. Loppers and hand saws will be useful. Participants should bring drinking water and food for personal consumption. Hammer and nails will be needed for placing trail markers.

Although it was believed at the last meeting that funds on hand would suffice for purchase of materials for the planned bog bridge on the Heyl Trail near Elm Street, that proved not to be the case. Subsequently, a grant proposal for \$750 has been submitted to seek support for those costs. Current plans are to build that bog bridge on Saturday June 6. Some digging to improve drainage might be done beforehand.

Jim Faughnan worked on rehabilitating the bog bridge on the upper Ballard Trail. The bridge still needs to be raised by 6 to 8 inches and have 5 to 10 boards replaced. Materials needed are already available. With these changes, that bog bridge would seem likely to last another 5 to 10 years. It was proposed that this work be done in the latter part of June or July.

Pete Griggs pointed out a problem of water flow across the Ballard Trail downstream from the Grand Canyon. Correcting the situation would require permission to work on private property. Doug Hardy will inquire about the possibility of gaining permission.

Sean Ogle plans to lead volunteers with the Upper Valley Trails Alliance to improve the crossing at the lower end of the Grand Canyon.

Brie Swenson is to be arranging for a volunteer group from King Arthur Flour to clear trail drainages on Parcel 5, continuing work initiated by Bob Fiskén.

Peter Griggs reported that the treadway of the King Arthur Trail is very rough with roots and seems not to have received recent maintenance. This trail has been popular in the recent past so improving the treadway would be quite worthwhile.

Several speakers commented on a notable increase in use of trails during the present pandemic and on the need for promoting trail etiquette.

A Discover Norwich Trails program of hikes for the public was prepared by Steve Flanders and John McCormick. Details are to appear on the committee website <<https://norwichtrails.org>> along with an email address for hike participants to register in advance. Notices about the series of hikes are to appear on the Norwich listserv and elsewhere.

The town has issued a request for proposals from companies to work on the Brown Schoolhouse Road bridge replacement. Requested state funding to aid that construction was not forthcoming, and no decision has been received for grant proposals submitted to four Upper Valley philanthropic organizations. Private donations to the town in support of that bridge replacement were reported now to total \$3400. An anonymous donor has offered to match any future donations which are individually greater than \$1000.

Sean Ogle reported that the Upper Valley Trails Alliance has a great variety of tools for trail work now available for loan.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark