

Minutes

Norwich Trails Committee and volunteers monthly meeting

7 pm, November 1, 2023

Norwich Historical Society

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89255864325>

Attendees:

Norwich Trails Committee (NTC) members present: Craig Layne and Cody Williams.

Absent: (position vacant)

Volunteers and members of the public: George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Stephen Flanders (scribe on Zoom), Nick Krembs (facilitator), Peter Griggs, John McCormick, Sean Ogle (Zoom), Gerry Plummer, and Cathy Redpath

AGENDA

1. **Approval of agenda:** Krembs called the meeting to order at 7 pm. There were no changes to the agenda.
2. Comments from those present: Faughnan reported on the progress of the “Kids’ Bridge” slated to cross between Hazen Meadow and near the VFW post. The bridge has been ordered with a yet-to-be announced delivery date. Graham Webster will soon prep the site, contributing labor, machine time and materials to the project.

Town interactions

3. Updates from the Conservation Commission: Layne reported on the following.
 - Burton Woods signage proposal: The proposal is to request voluntary compliance with a weight-limit restriction to be posted near the summit of the road. Tracy Hall has shown no interest in moving forward on the idea. A letter of concern from neighbors on the far side of Griggs Mountain was discussed.

Infrastructure

4. Update from the UVTA: Sean Ogle reported that the trail counter on the Gile Mountain Trail has been replaced and a new one installed at Parcel 5. He reported the completion of a handicap-friendly trail on the Milton Frye Conservation Area.
5. Reports on recent trail blockages and actions taken or planned: Windfalls and other problems on Norwich trails have been minor.
6. Ballard Trail Repair
 - Status of work: Faughnan and Bob Fiskén have sketched in a passable reroute of the failed section of the Ballard Trail, uphill of the landslide with some help from volunteers. About 800 feet of 18- to 24-inch-wide trail has been cut into the hill—too narrow for use by snowshoers. The stream-spanning planks are slippery when wet.
Meeting attendees heartily applauded Faughnan and Fiskén for their work.

- Additional work needed: Temporary signs are indicated to inform users that the trail is narrow, under construction and should be used with caution. The trail will be posted with signs indicating the new route and intermediate markings. In 2024, the trail will need to be widened.
 - Formalize ROW: Discussion ensued over the draft memo advocating that the town enter into an agreement with the landowners to formalize some form of right of way and to permit taxpayer funds to be expended as necessary to keep this, the only privately held portion of the Ballard Trail, open. After some discussion and support of a family landowner representative, it was agreed that such a memo should be forwarded from the Conservation Commission to the town manager.
7. Trail projects for 2023
- Blue Ribbon Trail: Completion of blazing is planned for 2024.
 - Gile Mountain Trail annual maintenance: Trail work will be performed on Sunday, November 5, starting at 8:30.
8. Trail projects for 2024
- Replacing the wooden bridge on the lower part of the Gile Mountain Trail.
 - Bradley Hill/Ladeau/Kerwin trail and class IV road drainage: After some discussion, it was agreed to approach the Upper Valley Trails Alliance for an estimate on repairing erosion and returning the trail to the right of way, where feasible.
 - Gile Mountain fire tower update: The town manager is aware of the status of the fire tower--\$5K is earmarked for materials and \$15K for technical services. Discussions with technical experts are under way to identify next steps.
9. Update on trails signage
- Identify locations of needed signage and content: It was recommended that FY2023 funds be allocated to replenishing the material stock necessary for signage. The inventory of proposed sign content was alluded to. It was suggested that some progress in sign construction could be achieved over the winter.

Financial

10. Plan for funding in Trails line item in Conservation Commission budget
- Faughnan has provided the Conservation Commission with budgetary estimates for the costs of lumber and crushed stone for annual maintenance. Layne reported that next fiscal year's Trails line item will be the same as in the current year.

Other

11. Webpage update:
- Inclusion of Woody Adams trail descriptions and maps was not discussed.
12. **Adjourn:** After determining that there will be a December meeting, Krembs closed the meeting at 8:30 pm.