

7 pm, December 6, 2023

Norwich Historical Society

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

Attendees:

Norwich Trails Committee (NTC) members present: None

Volunteers and members of the public: George Clark (acting scribe), Jim Faughnan, Elfie Forbes, Nick Krembs (facilitator), Sean Ogle (on Zoom), Gerry Plummer, and Cathie Redpath

The agenda was approved as presented.

Updates from the Conservation Commission and related items:

The Town will not pursue any changes in status of Burton Woods Road; such as revision of weight limits or trail designation. Along Burton Woods, addition of arrow signs would help trail users to stay on the route and avoid entering private lands at intersections. No signs along Bragg Hill Road state that the parking area at the landing is available for users of Burton Woods or indicate how to reach that trail from the parking area. Possible placement of additional signs along Bragg Hill would be conditional upon approval by neighbors. An inspection in spring 2024 will be needed to settle details about prospective signage.

Along Pattrell Road, a small sign indicating the intersection with the Powers Trail would be helpful.

The Trails Committee has not yet heard from the Town Manager about their recommendation that the Town pursue a formal agreement to maintain the right of way of the Ballard Trail across the privately owned segment where construction of the reroute continues.

Update from the Upper Valley Trails Alliance:

Sean Ogle reported from the Upper Valley Trails Alliance which is wrapping up the field work season for 2023. A trail counter along the left hand trail on entering Parcel 5 recorded 200 per month over a 3 month period this fall; this was an unexpectedly low number considering the number of vehicles commonly seen in the Parcel 5 lot. Because of the branching of trails going out from that lot, it is challenging to monitor the number of users in that part of Parcel 5 with only a single counter. A change in counter location might be made for the winter season. For the Gile Mountain Trail, another counter recorded 3400 in the month of September, indicating continued heavy use of that trail. Equivalent data could not be obtained for October because of technical problems with the counter.

Recent activity on trails:

Jim Faughnan reported that Doug Hardy had recently cleared five tree blockages from the upper Ballard trail. One small tree has been cleared from the Parcel 5 trail.

Gerry Plummer noted that advisory signs for hunting season are still in place along the Ballard Trail. The reroute section of the lower Ballard Trail is quite icy at present, and the ice warning signs could be set out.

The Gile Mountain Trail annual maintenance work was completed on November 5.

Trail projects for 2024:

1) The Woody Adams Trail needs trail markers to facilitate winter use. Some would favor an additional sign for that trail to be placed along Turnpike Road, but concerns about parking issues have overruled that proposal.

The possibility of a winter hike off trail in the Woody Adams parcel was proposed to familiarize trail workers with lesser known features of that tract. Perhaps such a hike can be held in January.

2) The Bradley Hill Trail continues to present problems in routing and drainage. Sean Ogle of the Upper Valley Trails Alliance has agreed to take a look along with others to see what might be done. The problems encountered on the Bradley Hill Trail were considered partially equivalent to conditions found along Brown Schoolhouse and Upper Loveland.

3) More work will be needed on the lower Ballard Trail reroute. In the "horseshoe" area at the upstream end, drainage will be a concern. Numerous "bridges" will be needed along the reroute. It is anticipated that the reroute will not receive much use in the winter.

4) No changes are to be forthcoming on vehicle regulations on the Burton Woods route. Any maintenance there would have to be hand work and would be vulnerable to destruction by trucks.

5) The frame of the Kids' Bridge was assembled on Huntley Meadow with several Trails Committee volunteers participating in that work. The bridge frame was then moved into position over Charles Brown Brook thus connecting Huntley Meadow with the American Legion parcel on Beaver Meadow Road. The decking and initial work on entries to the bridge are soon to be completed, again with assistance from Trails Committee volunteers. More permanent arrangements for entry to the bridge are to be completed in the spring. Any proposals concerning connecting trails remain for future consideration.

Other Topics:

Jim Faughnan volunteered to review a lengthy list of Norwich trails signage and content of those signs.

The Norwich Trails website needs a map and description for the Woody Adams parcel. Additional updating of the website is needed for the recent changes at Brookmead, the connection of Parcel 5 and McIndoe, and at other locations.

Respectfully submitted,

George Clark