

# Minutes

## Norwich Trails Committee and volunteers monthly meeting

7 pm, January 3, 2024

Norwich Historical Society

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

### Attendees:

*Norwich Trails Committee (NTC) members present:* Craig Layne (Zoom) and Cody Williams. *Absent:* (position vacant)

*Volunteers and members of the public:* George Clark (Zoom), Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskin (Zoom), Stephen Flanders (scribe), Elisabeth Hammer (Zoom), Nick Krembs (facilitator), Sean Ogle (Zoom), Gerry Plummer, and Cathie Redpath

### AGENDA

1. **Approval of agenda:** Krembs called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm
2. Comments from those present: There were no suggested revisions or other comments.

### Town interactions

3. Updates from the Conservation Commission
  - Formalize ROW on Ballard Trail: Layne reported interest in continuing consideration of a right of way across the Griggs segment of land on the part of the family and of the town manager.

### Infrastructure

4. Update from the UVTA: Ogle reported that the two trail counters are up and running at Gile Mountain and Parcel Five.
  - Bradley Hill Trail Reclamation—UVTA proposal: Ogle described the work needed to repair the northern end of the Bradley Hill Trail, where it meets Ladeaux and Kerwin Hill Roads, which has been severely eroded and is poorly drained. In addition to volunteer time for tree cutting and work with hand tools to establish a treadway and a system of drainage, the project will require rental of an excavator. It was recommended to commit the balance in the current fiscal year Trails line item to the approximately \$1,600, required for the equipment. Permission from the town manager and coordination with the chief, Department of Public Works will be required, because the trail is a town right of way. The contracted machine work should be completed by June 30, 2024 to assure proper expenditure of current fiscal year funds.
5. Reports on recent trail blockages and actions taken or planned: Faughnan reported that a volunteer had cleared several trees on the upper part of the Ballard Trail and that he had cleared several trees on the Gile Mountain Trail. Some trees were

reported down on the Tucker Trail, near the intersection with the Appalachian Trail, a segment maintained by Eric Friets.

6. Trail projects for 2024: Krembs led a discussion on the following.
  - Woody Adams trail markers: Redpath reported flagging the new trails with blue surveyors' tape. A sign will be repositioned at the bottom end to identify the trail entrance.
  - Ballard Trail relocation: Faughnan reported the treadway to be soft in the current thawed conditions. He noted that some more robust, but short bridges will be needed, as the segment is developed, further.
  - Gile Mountain fire tower update: Williams is coordinating a date for a fire-tower expert, Luke O'Brien, to assess work that may be needed.
  - Possible bridge over "Grand Canyon" crossing: Word was received that some trail users found the crossing to be difficult and recommended placement of a bridge at this location. After some discussion of the stability of the current stepping stones and the possibility of a safety rope, the matter was tabled for further consideration.
7. Update on Kids' Bridge: Faughnan reported that he and Fiske had addressed some issues with sharp edges on the railing and had installed a wire mesh to enhance safety. He proposed that the short trail leading to the bridge from the Legion driveway, be called the "Kids' Trail", which seemed to be acceptable to those present.

### **Financial**

8. Plan for funding in Trails line item in Conservation Commission budget: There was no further substantive input on the following topics.
  - Costs of lumber and crushed stone for annual maintenance
  - Cost of lumber for Ballard Trail improvements
  - Gile Tower steps

### **Other**

9. Norwich Trails website updates by Plummer
  - He is adding the Woody Adams Trail, both textual description and trail locations to the online maps. He circulated a proposed new Gile Mountain Detail map (available online for review at: <https://caltopo.com/p/268SL>) for comment.
  - He recommended different color codes to distinguish multi-use trails from foot-traffic-only trails.
  - He is establishing a new, more efficient and repeatable process to meet the goal of precisely controlling the trails and related features to be shown on each of our maps, A new, custom Norwich Trails base layer will be used for all new maps, each of which will be built by overlaying trails and other features, rendered from data specifically curated by Norwich Trails volunteers.
  - He will work with Williams and other volunteers to make the underlying data (generated by others) more accurate, and consistent.

**Adjournment:** Krembs adjourned the meeting at 8:15 pm.