

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for February 1, 2017

Present: George Clark, Gered Dunne, Kristen Fauci, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskens, Peter Griggs, David Hubbard, Nick Krembs, John Langhus, Brie Swanson

On January 24, six members of the committee met with the Interim Town Manager and the Chief of Police to discuss how to improve conditions around the Gile Mountain Trail during mud season and other times of the year. For mud season, the trail and its parking lot are to be closed, with barriers at their entrances. At multiple locations long both sides of Turnpike Road, large signs announcing closure might include "turn around" instructions at suitable intersections. Signs might also be placed on Main Street. The Conservation Commission and Department of Public Works might share the cost of signs. Improved signage is also needed to alert trail users about the town dog ordinance. It was suggested that on peak days a volunteer be present to facilitate orderly use of the area.

In the past, certain other town trails have been closed for mud season, and the question was raised as to what other trails might be closed this year.

No one has volunteered to serve as a representative to meet with the public on peak days at the Gile Mountain Trail.

Details of preparation for this year's mud season are to be on the agenda for the next meeting.

A fallen tree was reported to have been recently cleared on the Parcel 5 trail. Two current trail blockages were reported from the middle portion of the Blue Ribbon Trail.

An article on forest fragmentation and conservation has been prepared by a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission and is now ready for publication.

A grant proposal submitted by the Land Management Council would, if funded, support a Vermont Youth Conservation Corps crew in building structures crossing wet areas along the upper part of the Ballard Trail.

A field trip is to be held to examine a possible route for a proposed bike trail to extend along Charles Brown Brook between Beaver Meadow Road and the brook.

About a dozen people met recently to plan field trips to scout potential routes for new connecting trails on approved parcels.

Brie Swanson and Kristen Fauci reviewed plans for a proposed series of carefully scheduled Fun Runs along Norwich trails. Most of these events would be for adults, but there would also be opportunity for children. These plans were favorably received by the committee.

The Milton Frye Nature Area Committee has recently suffered losses in membership, leaving only two active members. Extended efforts to recruit new volunteers have been unsuccessful. Inquiries are now being made about the possibility of transferring activities of that committee to

other town organizations. Perhaps the Trails Committee could take over maintenance of the nature area trails. This suggestion was favorably received by the committee.

Supports for the wooden boardwalk at the Schmidt Bog have severely deteriorated, and possible repair was discussed. The Conservation Commission is to be contacted about this.

The agenda for the next meeting is to include discussion of what work remains to be done for the Gile Mountain Trail. It was suggested that the work could be completed there in a short series of work sessions.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark