

## Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for November 6, 2019

Present: George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskin, Steve Flanders, Pete Griggs, Doug Hardy, David Hubbard, Nick Krembs, John McCormick, Sean Ogle, Gerry Plummer, Cathie Redpath, Liz Russell. Cam Cross and Ellen Kitchel were present during the early part of the meeting.

Cam Cross presented a history of recent issues on the Bradley Hill Trail. It was recommended at the meeting that issues outside the purview of this committee be presented to the Town Manager and Selectboard.

The town-owned southern end of the Bradley Hill Trail has not been kept open in recent years, and people have instead followed a trail through adjacent privately owned land. The Trails Committee plans to reopen that town-owned portion of the Bradley Hill Trail. The committee is to hold a work session on the Bradley Hill Trail starting at 8:00 AM on Sunday November 17. Participants should bring work gloves, drinking water, and chain saws. Wearing bright colors is suggested during the deer hunting season. Parking is to be at 641 Bradley Hill Road, the northernmost residence on that road. Jim Faughnan is to contact Herb Durfee about the committee's plan to work on that trail.

A small number of committee members plan to clear water bars and other drainages on the Gile Mountain Trail before winter, but no date has been set. The committee is grateful to Sean Ogle for providing an updated report on recent use of the Gile Mountain Trail as determined by an automatic counter; the results provide data agreeing with more subjective impressions of the amount of use of that trail.

Strong winds and rain around the end of October resulted in numerous tree blockages on trails in Norwich. Committee members have cleared some of those blockages and are planning to work on others. Nevertheless there is a need for more reports about blockages in locations not recently visited by the committee. If you find trail blockages, please report them at [norwichtrails@gmail.com](mailto:norwichtrails@gmail.com).

The committee held a productive work session on October 6 at Cossingham Road Farm Trails and another useful work session including cutting back brush on Parcel 5 on October 22. On October 25, the Upper Valley Trails Alliance with a crew of volunteers installed stepping stones at water crossings along the Ballard Trail; these sites are to be revisited in 2020 to determine how well these stepping stones have held up during icing and strong water flows.

The committee is hopeful that limited expansion of parking areas at trailheads for Gile Mountain, Burton Woods, Happy Hill, and Elm Street can be completed during 2020.

A presubmission for a grant proposal to the state to help support construction of a new bridge to replace that collapsed on Brown School House Road was submitted by the deadline. For the proposal itself, there will be a need to obtain community feedback, and messages are to be sent out to elicit such feedback and to inform voters in advance of Town Meeting. By the December meeting of this committee, drafts for a series of educational listserv messages are to have been prepared.

The committee is grateful to Steve Flanders, who with the aid of Gerry Plummer, has been leading committee efforts to obtain state funding and town backing to enable replacement of the collapsed bridge.

Possibilities for obtaining funds for the replacement bridge from private sources were discussed. Cathie Redpath is to contact an experienced recruiter of private funds for advice on how best to proceed.

Doubt was expressed about the possibility of making the replacement bridge accessible for wheelchairs; steepness of terrain and lack of space would seem to preclude such access. A site visit with a construction specialist might be needed to consider further whether there is any possibility for handicapped access.

Gerry Plummer has been evaluating options for the prospective website of the Trails Committee. The projected major grant proposal for the replacement bridge includes reference to the website, so establishment of that website should move forward relatively quickly. It is intended that the website be arranged so that several people, rather than just one, can enter content for the committee. Comparison of existing trail-related websites, such as those for neighboring towns, may help guide decisions about the eventual form of the Norwich site, and Gerry Plummer has provided links for a variety of trail-related websites for the Upper Valley. He is to communicate further with Cody Williams of the Conservation Commission concerning specifics for the new website.

Respectfully submitted,  
George Clark