

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for June 3, 2020

Present: George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fisken, Steve Flanders, Rod Francis, Pete Griggs, Doug Hardy, Byron Haynes, David Hubbard, Nick Krembs, Jane LaMasurier, John McCormick, Sean Ogle, Gerry Plummer, Liz Russell, Jonathan Smolin, Justin Strauss, John Wiggin

In a work session on May 9, members of this committee cleared the Converse Loop along the upper Ballard Trail. A photograph of participants is on the committee website.

Bob Fisken reported a maple with a three foot trunk diameter down on the Cossingham Farm Road Trails. He and Justin Strauss will lead the effort to remove that blockage. Gerry Plummer and Jim Faughnan cleared a blockage on the Connector Trail and slightly changed the route of that trail. Doug Hardy reported that Bridge McDowell had cleared three locations on the lower Blue Ribbon Trail. Doug Hardy also reported that the water crossing on the upper Ballard Trail at the lower end of the Grand Canyon has been improved.

An area of the Ballard Trail needing work is by a ditch about a third of the way from the Grand Canyon down towards Brown Schoolhouse Road. Sean Ogle is to be leading a volunteer crew for work at that location.

A Trails Committee work session is to be held starting at 8:30 AM on Saturday June 6 to construct a bog bridge on the Heyl Trail near Elm Street. Six members of the committee have volunteered to help on this project to be conducted in conformity with public health guidelines. Participants needing to have tools hauled to the site should contact Jim Faughnan. If there is to be a parking problem, advanced requests for parking spaces are to be made by phone to neighbors along upper Elm Street.

A work session on Sunday July 12 is planned to elevate a bog bridge on the upper Ballard Trail.

David Hubbard reported that rebuilding of two eroded sections of the Ballard Trail near Ballard Park can be completed with payment to include provision of a truck and Bobcat. An alternative proposal for installing a culvert at the upstream site would be appreciably more invasive at that location. Several other individuals with special interest in that site are being consulted about the project..

Trails allowing mountain bikes within and near the Appalachian Trail (AT) Corridor were the subject of an extended discussion. There is substantial local interest in having trails available for mountain biking, but this interest does not fit easily within the management objectives for the AT Corridor. Strava maps from recent months show use by mountain bikers of unauthorized trails within the corridor. Meanwhile the National Forest Service has been reviewing a proposal from this committee and the Upper Valley Mountain Biking Association (UVMBA) to allow mountain bike use on the cross-corridor Joshua Trail connecting Joshua Road to the south with the Tucker (Happy Hill) Trail to the north.

There has been uncertainty about the ownership and rights-of-way along part of the Tucker Trail.

It was suggested that many mountain bike riders using unauthorized trails might be unaware of restrictions on use of bikes within the corridor. Signage at additional entry points for the corridor might help to reduce biking on unauthorized routes.

Earlier discussions of cross-corridor trails envisioned a proposed trail to allow bikes to pass from the northern end of the Joshua Trail westward across three privately owned parcels north of the corridor. In addition, farther west along the corridor, another proposed trail was to continue southward from the Meadow Junction over privately owned land to provide another cross-corridor route for bikes. However, no formal agreements have been reached for either of these proposed routes which would potentially enable bikers crossing the corridor to continue outside the corridor along permanently established routes.

Holly Knox of the National Forest Service had replied to an inquiry from Nick Krembs about the status of the Forest Service review of corridor proposal. She summarized unresolved questions about the Dothan Brook and Joshua Trails. The committee agreed on content to be included in a reply concerning these unresolved issues.

Steve Flanders and Doug Hardy are to be representatives from the Trails Committee on a town committee to review proposals from outside contractors for construction of a new trail bridge on Brown Schoolhouse Road over Charles Brown Brook. The total of private donations so far received in support of that bridge stands at \$3400.

Steve Flanders reported that seven participants were on the Discover Norwich Trails hike along the Hazen Trail in May. The June hike of this series is to be on Parcel 5.

Steve Flanders briefly reviewed new changes on the committee website <<https://norwichtrails.org>>. Special attention was given to a new section about dogs on trails, and it was agreed to add a link to a pertinent entry submitted by Norwich Trails to the Norwich List Serv on May 22.

Sean Ogle briefly reviewed several important upcoming projects of the Upper Valley Trails Alliance.

The committee thanks Rod Francis for hosting this Zoom meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark