

Minutes

Norwich Trails Committee

7 pm, September 3, 2025

Norwich Historical Society

Attendees

Heather Benson, Jay Benson, George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskin, Pete Griggs, Nick Krembs, John McCormick, Sean Ogle, Gerry Plummer, Cody Williams

The meeting began shortly after 7:00p.

Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved.

Comments from those present

Nick informed the committee that there is an opening for an adopter of the Cossingham/Happy Hill section of the AT.

Jim shared concerns over safety due to erosion encroaching on a section of the upper Ballard Trail exposing a steep drop-off. A work day was set for 8a Sunday September 7 to reroute this section.

Updates from the Conservation Commission

Cody and Bob recapped the last Conservation Commission discussions around the proposed reroute and bridge to span a washout on the upper Ballard Trail. The commission voted to approve the purchase of materials for the bridge.

Updates from the UVTA

The reconstruction of the lower bridge on the Rieser Trail has been completed. The UVTA Tour de Taste is this Sunday September 7 and has sold out. Trail Corp is over for the season. Trail counter batteries have been replaced in preparation for the busy fall hiking season. Sean will have numbers for us soon.

Reports on recent trail blockages and actions taken or planned

Mostly minor stuff.

Historical Society Walktober event

Sarah Rooker of the Norwich Historical Society is organizing a series of walks as part of

a Walktober event. Cody is going to lead a couple of after-school hikes for parents with kids. Some discussion was had around good candidate trails that are less frequented. Cody will circulate the URL to sign up to lead walks.

Unleashed dogs on Schmidt Bog trails

Cody has ordered two signs to post at the Hawk Pine and Loveland entrances to the Schmidt Bog trail network. Discussion was had around signage and interactions with on and off-leash dogs and their owners on trail (especially regarding trails that cross private and public land); the hope and expectation is that all parties should be respectful and coexist with kindness.

Gile bench donation

In accordance with the recently passed Selectboard Gift Policy, Bob and Jim met with the Town Manager who gave his approval for the town to accept the gift of a bench to memorialize the passing of a family member. The item is on the agenda for the next Selectboard meeting September 10 to seek the Selectboard's approval.

Trail and utility ROW

Bob circulated Steven True's response to his inquiry about what, if any, obligation utilities have to repair damage from maintaining lines along Loveland Trail and Powers Trail. Given the utilities easement along these sections of trail, the town has essentially no control or requirement of notice or repair to damage. The best course of action would be to contact and coordinate with the utilities directly to try to avoid damage.

Trail projects for 2025

Ballard bridge workday recap from August 24

Was a great work day with a great group of volunteers. A first time extending an existing bridge and went very smoothly.

Upper Ballard bridge

The conservation commission voted to fund the materials at it's last meeting. In accordance with the recently passed revised Selectboard Handbook, Bob and Jim have gotten approval from the Town Manager. Also in accordance to the recently passed Selectboard Handbook, Bob has diligently investigated the intricacies of the Land Management Council and Prudential Committee around landowner permission for the bridge as it sits on Fire District land. The issue will be discussed at a special meeting of the Land Management Council to be held September 4 at 6:30p before the Prudential Committee's normal meeting. Pending approval from the Land Management Council a work day was set for August 21 at 8a.

Upper Blue Ribbon bog bridges

Garrett and Brian recently completed this work and said it went smoothly.

Stairway to Heaven

This work is slated to be done next season. Nick and Cody will work with the Town Manager to navigate the new expectations to maintain compliance with the Seleboard's Gift Policy around applying for a grant from the Norwich Women's Club to fund the work.

Schmidt Bog bog bridges

This has been a potential work day for the last couple of years. The bog bridges are still in good shape but get quite slick when wet. A group of neighbors worked diligently several years ago to clear invasives (primarily buckthorn) that have taken over much of the bog. Cody noted that buckthorn and nightshade continue to encroach the boardwalk and overtake the bog as a whole. Without a sustained yearly effort to fight invasives, the bog itself may not be worth keeping.

Website updates

Cody suggested updating various maps and pages that still use the old "Norwich Nature Area" name rather than the official "Milt Frye Nature Area". George provided some historical context for the various names.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23p.