

TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

141 Keyes Road, 1st floor Conference Room

Jan. 28, 2020, at 8:00 a.m.

Attending: Bob White (chair), Delia Kaye (Natural Resources Division), Spencer Borden, David Clarke, Carlene Hempel (scribe), Bill Kemeza, Jonathan “Jay” Keyes, Ken Miller

Members absent: None

Stewards present: Beth Baryiames, Brian Ford, Alice Galinat, Wayne Lobb, Bill Robichaud

Visitors: Susan Bates (liaison from the Select Board), Elizabeth “Eli” Parker

Minutes: On a motion made by Bill Kemeza and seconded by Spencer Borden, the minutes of the December 2019 meeting were unanimously approved as amended.

STEWARD REPORTS:

Barrett’s Mill Trail: Steward Brian Ford reported the trail is in good shape. There’s a lot of mud in the parking lot.

Old Rifle Range Trail: Steward Alice Galinat reported that the trail is in good shape but expressed concern that people are parking in the lot on Old Marlborough Road to access the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Director of Natural Resources Delia Kaye reported the Town is looking into installing a parking lot on Powder Mill Road for BFRT parking. It would be on the same side as the switchback, on the other side of the trail, north of Powder Mill Road by Stone Root Lane. But this is not an immediate solution.

Emerson-Thoreau Amble: Steward Wayne Lobb reported that the trail is in good shape.

Mattison Field: Committee Chair Bob White reported there were many potholes at the parking lot of Mattison Field. He told this to Delia earlier in the month, who had Concord Public Works put some gravel at the site to even it out.

Reformatory Branch Trail: Steward Bill Robichaud reported the trail is in good shape.

West Concord Park: Steward Beth Baryiames reported that the trail is in good shape.

White Pond Reservation: Committee member and Steward Ken Miller reported there’s a very big blowdown up from the cove on the yellow trail that goes up toward Sudbury. Bob said he would try to take care of it with his chain saw and will let Natural Resources know if he needs help.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

Tree Presentation by Spencer Borden: Committee member Spencer Borden, a “wood turner,” gave a presentation on the wonder of trees. He discussed their resilience, vulnerabilities, and their extraordinary ability to survive and propagate. As part of his presentation, he recommended “The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate,” by Peter Wohlleben. Spencer discussed at length his work in making bowls from burls on trees and noted the largest burl he’s ever seen is at White Pond on the road to the water facility on the right side.

Bicycle Access to Conservation Trails Update: Delia said she shared the Trails Committee’s draft policy regarding bike use on town trails with the Natural Resources Commission. The NRC members suggested Delia and the Trails Committee speak with anyone in town who is managing land - including Public Works, the Recreation Commission – to float the idea of whether there could be a unified town policy. There was a concern about ebikes, she said, noting that the NRC questions whether ebikes are appropriate on conservation land. Delia said this will need to be further evaluated. Bob reminded the group that it would be ideal to have a policy set by May in time for Concord Bike Fest. Delia added it would also be useful to have a conversation about the policy with bike advocates in town such as Phil Posner.

2020 Mass Trails Grants Application Update: Bob reported that he and Committee member Carlene Hempel walked the section of the main trail on the Old Rifle Range and decided to ask a contractor for advice on the project. Carlene went back with local contractor Bob Hale to discover that he estimated the job would cost about \$1 million. Then Delia and Bob went back with the contractor to narrow the scope of the project. Delia then returned to the Old Rifle Range again with the town engineer to discuss the work and decided on a 400-foot section between targets 1 and 3 that could be upgraded. She said the town would look to widen the 2-foot path to 4 or 5 feet. The deadline for the grant proposal is Feb. 1. If awarded, the money would have to be spent by June 30. Delia estimated the project would ultimately cost several hundred thousand dollars. Trail steward Alice Galinat asked if the trail would be shut down and Bob said we could have a detour along the hill behind Caterina Heights to bypass the work area.

OTHER BUSINESS:

2020 ArtRamble: Bob said this year’s theme is water. The exhibit will run again in the fall at the Town Forest.

Guides on Reformatory Branch Trail: Committee member David Clarke passed out a summary of the guides distributed from the kiosks located where the trail crosses Lowell Road and Monument Street. The 2019 total of nearly 1,400 guides is slightly less than the totals distributed for 2017 and 2018. More than twice as many guides were taken from the Monument Street dispenser compared to the one at Lowell Road.

Bob said the town of Bedford will be surfacing its section of the Reformatory Branch Trail all the way to the Concord town line, and will include a culvert under Rte. 62. The boundary in Concord is about a quarter of a mile west from Rte. 62. Bedford will call this stretch the Minuteman Bikeway Extension.

Knotweed: Wayne asked whether the town has a plan to deal with invasive knotweed. He fears it will take over the town if we don’t do something about it. Delia says the town whacks down the knotweed at

Millbrook every year, but removal is challenging because it's deep-rooted. The control strategy is to keep it from spreading. Wayne asked if trail stewards should take it down and noted a new patch starting up on the Amble. Delia says stewards should let her know so efforts can be coordinated.

Adjournment: On a motion made by Bill Kemeza and seconded by Ken Miller, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

Next Meeting: The next Trails Committee meeting is scheduled for Feb. 25, 2020, at 8 a.m., at 141 Keyes Road.

Respectfully submitted,
Carlene Hempel