TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

141 Keyes Road, 1st floor Conference Room

January 29, 2019, at 8:00 a.m.

Attending: Bob White (chair), Lori Capone (Department of Natural Resources), Spencer Borden, David Clarke, Carlene Hempel (scribe), Jonathan “Jay” Keyes, and Ken Miller

Members absent: Peter Siebert

Stewards present: Gene Delsener, Alice Galinat, Lisa Pohl, Joe Regali, Bill Robichaud, Tom Ryde.

Visitors: None.

Minutes: The minutes of the November 27, 2018, meeting were unanimously approved as amended.

Steward Reports:

Emerson-Thoreau Amble and the River Confluence: Trail Steward Lisa Pohl brought pictures to illustrate a tree down in the Town Forest. She had previously reported two trees down, but Committee Chair Bob White had already removed one. She also reported flooding on the Amble that rose above the bog bridges between the police station and Heywood Meadow.

Annursnac - Baptist Brook Conservation Land Trail: Trail Steward Joe Regali reported that the trail is clear.

Reformatory Branch: Steward Bill Robichaud said the trail looks good. However, water is flowing across the path near Bartlett Hill Road. He said there’s more water than would come from a typical snow melt, which has caused the area to be very icy. Assistant Director of Natural Resources Lori Capone said she would keep an eye on it.

Old Rifle Range: Steward Alice Galinat said the trails are clear.

October Farm Riverfront: Steward Tom Ryde said the trail is in good shape but said a leaning tree has been repurposed into a firepit bench beside the trail. Also, committee member Carlene Hempel mentioned that 130 acres contiguous to the October Farm property have been donated to Mass Audubon Society, which might have an impact on Ball’s Hill Road.

Westvale-Harrington Park: New trail steward Gene Delsener introduced himself to the committee.

Punkatasset Preserve and Estabrook Woods: In the November meeting, Carlene suggested the committee install a bog bridge over a wet and often impassable area beyond the spillway on the east side of Hutchins Pond. Bob has since investigated the area and found significant water flooding in the area that may be caused by the beaver “deceiver” pipe being too small for the
volume of water in heavy rains. Lori said that Beaver Solutions, who maintains this beaver deceiver, has removed debris to improve the flooding situation and they will be back in the spring to fix the deceiver upstream from Hutchins Pond and will evaluate whether additional work is needed.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

Assabet River Grant Project update: Lori showed pictures before and after clearing of the new picnic area. She also reported that the parking area was installed in December. The Conservation Crew will construct a split-rail fence around the parking area in the spring. The remaining $10,000 from the project will go into plantings and wood chips intended to keep invasives under control. Bill asked if there would be a kiosk at the site but Lori said she's thinking instead about a framed map because a kiosk might overwhelm the area. As background, the town was awarded $42,000 in response to a grant proposal to build boat launches in two areas in West Concord: one at town-owned conservation land behind the former Citizen’s Bank on the corner of Main Street and Baker Avenue and the other at the Second Division Brook off Main Street, where there is already a place to launch/take out canoes but which has been improved by clearing invasive and installing picnic tables. This was part of the 50th Anniversary National Trails and Wild and Scenic Rivers Grant Program.

River Map: Lori is developing a full-color river map that will illustrate trail access and points of interest along the river throughout Concord. She plans to send a draft to the committee members for their input.

Annursnac-Baptist Brook Improvements: Bob talked about a new 18-foot-long bridge to be constructed this summer where the red trail crosses Baptist Brook. He identified another site for a potential bridge, though Lori said there might not be funding for that right away. In the meantime, Bob relocated the frequently flooded approach to a second brook crossing to higher dry ground and pulled some trees over the older path to block its use.

Boy Scouts of America Thoreau Leave No Trace Trail: Lori reported that the Boy Scouts are interested in creating a “Leave No Trace” trail from the Concord train station to the Thoreau Birth House. Lori is currently developing a trail guide and map for this purpose. The Boy Scouts have created a badge and medal for scouts who complete the trail, which has to be 10 miles long to qualify for the program. The Boy Scouts are also working with representatives from the Thoreau Society and the Thoreau Farm to develop the points of interest for the map. Lori said she will keep copies of the map in the Natural Resources office but will leave it up to the Boy Scouts and their other partners to post the guides in other places around town.

Powder Mill Conservation Area: Lori handed out a draft trail guide for this conservation area. Lori wanted to know if it should include the Thoreau Hills area. She also plans to track down the Sanborn Map from 1926 to determine the names of buildings in the area. Bob suggested blazing an additional loop beside the Assabet River but Lori said she needs to get permission from two property owners to do that. Bob said the Committee might want to contact the town of Acton to see if they want to coordinate. Lori said she included on the map the canoe launch in Acton at the
river crossing on Powder Mill Road. The trail does go further but Lori only showed the public access portion.

**West Concord Park**: Bob reported that the trail head looks very different since a small house there was razed and a much larger house is under construction. Lori said the Japanese knotweed is under control at the trail head, though there still is extensive black swallow-wort in the area. Also, Bob said yard waste debris is being dumped from the office park there. Clean-up will be a summer project.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Barrett’s Mill/Finigan Way**: The red trail to the pond north of Finigan Way was not well used and contains extensive debris from a downed tree. It has been abandoned, the trail and pond description removed from the guide.

**Townwide Map**: Lori reported that she is working on updating the Townwide trail map to include the newest acquisitions such as October Farm Riverfront and Baptist Brook.

**Bruce Freeman Rail Trail**: The trail remains closed but will open in the spring.

**List of Potential Projects**: Bob distributed a list of potential projects for updating with Trail Committee initiatives for 2019. He mentioned that already there are materials for bog bridges in town storage and said some could be used behind the Emerson House. He further suggested this could be an Appalachian Mountain Club volunteer project. Lori also discussed the trails map book project she was working on. She said there are issues with transferring maps into a portrait format. The committee members said we should continue with our current efforts in creating guides for specific trails.

**Adjournment**: The meeting adjourned at 9:21 a.m.

**Next Meeting**: The next Trails Committee meeting is scheduled for Feb. 26, 2019, at 8 a.m. in the first-floor conference room at 141 Keyes Road.

Respectfully submitted,

Carlene Hempel