

TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

141 Keyes Road, 1st floor Conference Room

Feb. 25, 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 Baryames, Brian Ford, Alice Galinat, Wayne Lobb, Joe Rigali, Bill Robichaud

Visitors: Susan Bates (liaison from the Select Board); Pam Howell, Annursnac Road

Minutes: On a motion made by Spencer Borden and seconded by Bill Kemeza, the minutes of the January 2020 meeting were unanimously approved as amended.

STEWARD REPORTS:

[Annursnac-Baptist Book Conservation Land](#): Steward Joe Rigali said the trail looks good.

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

[Westvale-Harrington Park](#): Director of Natural Resources Delia Kaye reported that she is working with the Harrington House caretakers and Ricky Marshall to establish a pollinator meadow at Harrington Park. Other pollinator meadow sites under development are at [Heywood Meadow](#) and at the [Barrett's Mill Conservation Area](#). The meadow will establish 6 to 8 inches tall and then be cut before it flowers to prevent weed seeds from taking root while the perennials will establish a robust root stock for next year.

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

Old Rifle Range Trail: Steward Alice Galinat reported that the trail is in good shape. She said there are noticeably fewer limbs coming down than last year.

Reformatory Branch Trail: Steward Bill Robichaud reported the trail is in good shape. It's getting muddy but clearing up well. He said he has been busy cleaning out ditches, especially in the Butternut Circle section of the trail. He said it makes a big difference to trail safety if leaves are removed from the holes and ditches that appear over time. He also reported that he attended a Cemetery Committee meeting because he was worried the committee was thinking of keeping bikes off the trail. Bill said he told members that the bike community is supportive of keeping cyclists safe and courteous.

West Concord Park: Steward Beth Baryiames reported that the trail looks wonderful. Beth wondered if there could be a crosswalk on Laws Brook Road because she worries people don't know there is a trailhead there in addition to the one next to the Warner's Woods apartment complex. Delia said a crosswalk proposal would go through a committee that is made up of the Police Department safety officer and Public Works, who would evaluate the stretch of road to make sure it's safe for pedestrians to cross. She cautioned that the committee doesn't like to do mid-block crosswalks and prefers intersections because that's a logical spot for cars to stop. Bob mentioned he likes the location of that trailhead because it is nearly across Laws Brook Road from Wright Road, which has a trail at the far end that will eventually connect with the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

White Pond Reservation: Committee member 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:

Minuteman Bikeway Extension: Bob reported that he and Bill Robichaud attended a hearing in Bedford to talk about the extension project. He said the town has completed its 25 percent design phase and is looking for public comment to include in the 75 percent plan. He said construction of the \$6+ million, 1.7-mile stretch from the depot in Bedford to the Concord line is supposed to start in 2022. It will include a 10-foot-wide culvert under Rte. 62. One complication noted in the meeting is a stretch of the trail will pass by the front lawn of four homes. Another worry is high-speed bikers on the trail and especially along that stretch.

Steward Training Planning: Delia and Bob had a meeting with a representative from Concord Land Conservation Trust to discuss creating a steward training program. The two groups decided to do a joint one-day training program. The town has contacted the Appalachian Mountain Club, which has trainers who will conduct a hands-on session in a classroom and out in the field. Bob asked the committee what people would like to see in the curriculum. Ken says he thinks the land trust has done a poor job of printing up enough blazes for their trails. Bob says he thinks the group is getting better, especially now that there are blazes that correspond with the Town of Concord's blazes. [October Farm](#) is a good example, he said. Alice said she would like training on how to approach people doing something wrong. If she's by herself, she doesn't say anything to wrong-doers and would like some advice on how to engage. Committee member Carlene Hempel said she would like training on how to spot and remove invasive plants. Committee member David Clarke said stewards should be aware that blazes get hidden behind leaves of low growth that needs to be cut away. Delia suspects some of the training will involve branch cutting and where to prune to preserve the health of the tree as well as a long-term aesthetic.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Parking: Ken says he thinks the October Farm lot should be expanded. Delia says there is more use because Mass Audubon is sharing it now and does not yet have parking for its property. Delia said the town spent some time looking at capacity, but there is a conservation restriction that limits the lot's size. Committee member Bill Kemeza asked if there will eventually be a visitor's center there. Delia says Mass Audubon has some remarkable buildings on site and are now trying to figure out how those

buildings will be used. Bob mentioned that [Mattison Field](#) is another lot that fills up. He noted that at least visitors there can park on the road, but noted the lot is often full to capacity.

MassTrails application update: Delia reported she filed a grant to MassTrails' 2020 "[Grant Round](#)" for \$34,500, which includes mostly surveying and engineering costs, to rehabilitate the Old Rifle Range main trail. Delia says the town's own staff would be responsible for some of the work. The survey would be done by a contracted service while the design would be done in-house.

Volunteers: Bill Robichaud said the committee should think about creating a formal volunteer work group to join the stewards. Delia said that is a goal she hopes the town's new land manager will take care of – recruiting volunteer work groups. She hopes the new staff member will function as a community organizer to tend to the town's 1,500 acres of conservation land.

West Concord Park: Beth mentioned that she is distressed at the amount of brush and sometimes trash she sees pushed onto the West Concord Park trail, apparently from the industrial and residential buildings that abut it. Delia acknowledged this is a long-standing problem at that site.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Pam Howell, a resident of Annursnac Hill Road, attended the meeting to tell the committee that some of her enjoyment of the trails [near her house](#) has been taken away and wanted the group to hear her perspective. She said she's been walking those trails for 21 years and was personally involved in securing the Baptist Brook conservation land as well as designating a vernal pool there 15 or 16 years ago. She said many of the stepping stones and roots along the trails have been disturbed or removed for easier access. But she objects to this philosophy of trail stewardship and urged the committee to leave the trail's stones and roots as they naturally are and have been for years.

Adjournment: On a motion made by Bill Kemeza and seconded by Spencer Borden, the meeting adjourned at 9 a.m.

Next Meeting: The next Trails Committee meeting is scheduled for March. 24, 2020, at 8 a.m., at 141 Keyes Road.

Respectfully submitted,
Carlene Hempel