TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
141 Keyes Road, 1st floor Conference Room
February 26, 2019, at 8:00 a.m.

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

Members absent: Spencer Borden

Stewards present: Alice Galinat, Bill Robichaud, Tom Ryde

Visitors: David Bell, Jared Keyes

Minutes: The minutes of the January 29, 2019, meeting were unanimously approved as amended.

Steward Reports:

Reformatory Branch: Steward Bill Robichaud said the trail looks good but icy.

Old Rifle Range: Steward Alice Galinat said a tree has come down on Old Mill Road.

October Farm Riverfront: Steward Tom Ryde said he found a 16-foot evergreen blowdown on the red trail. He also said the snow plow continues to skip the northeast corner of the lot, resulting in one unusable space.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

October Farm Riverfront Trails Presentation: Guest Jared Keyes came to speak about the Brewster property off Monument Street. He talked about the many interviews he’s had about the property as well as the hours he’s spent creating lists of the birds that can be found there. He also said there used to be trails around every edge of the water that William Brewster, the original owner of October Farm and an early naturalist and conservationist, once walked. Jared noted that there are trees that have fallen toward the back of the property, in the impoundments, and suspects Brewster would have cleaned those up. It is his opinion that the property has been “managed” for hundreds of years and should be still. He spoke with Jeff Collins, director of Mass Audubon’s Conservation Science Department about the issue, noting that Mass Audubon now controls 80 percent of the pond, but did not get a definitive answer about what that organization plans to do with the blowdowns. But Jared stressed he believes it is important to honor Brewster’s legacy of managing the back impoundments, adding that now, when the water is frozen, is the best time to do that cleanup work.

Assabet River Grant Project update: Assistant Director of Natural Resources Lori Capone showed the new full-color version of the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord rivers map she is developing to be
posted at the Baker Avenue site, as well as other to-be-determined sites along the river. She said she is also working on a planting plan for the areas that have been cleared at the site.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Retiring member: Committee Chair Bob White acknowledged that longtime member Peter Siebert is retiring from the Trails Committee and noted that interested replacements should express their interest via email to Lori (lcapone@concordma.gov) and Delia Kaye, director of the Natural Resources Commission (dkaye@concordma.gov).

Minuteman Bikeway Extension: Bill and Bob went to the Bedford Select Board meeting to hear a presentation about the status of the Minuteman Bikeway Extension to the Concord town line. MassDOT approved use of state and federal funding for the project in April 2014. The project is currently on the 2022 Transportation Improvement Plan. The proposal includes a public hearing in the spring for the 25 percent design. The 75 percent design will be developed this summer. The state will start the right-of-way process in the fall of 2019. Environmental permitting will take place in the winter of 2019/2020. Construction is planned for 2022/2023. The trail will be an asphalt surface, 12-feet wide and cost $6.8 million. The plan includes a bikeway underpass beneath Concord Road (Route 62).

New town-wide map: Lori showed a new draft of town map that now includes Annursnac-Baptist Brook Trail and the Brewster acquisition including what’s going to be called “Brewster Woods,” the 130-acre property donated to Mass Audubon that will eventually be open to the public and connects to the October Farm Riverfront.

Trail guide dispensers: Bob said they have been doing well where mounted under kiosk roofs but are leaking mounted only on posts. He has made enclosures for the four on posts that so far have kept the dispenser contents dry.

Volunteer Project ideas: Appalachian Mountain Club Bay Circuit Trail Volunteer Programs Supervisor Christine Viola contacted Bob with an offer to arrange a corporate volunteer work day this year. Bob suggested they could help to install bog bridges behind the Ralph Waldo Emerson House. Lori said there is a Town Meeting article for acquisition of more town land on the Emerson property, which includes land where the Emerson-Thoreau Amble exists. The reason for the warrant article is the Emerson Trust is looking for the town to acquire some of its property to create an endowment for upkeep of the house.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9 a.m.

Next Meeting: The next Trails Committee meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2019, at 8 a.m. in the Water & Sewer Division building at 135 Keyes Road.

Respectfully submitted,
Carlene Hempel