

TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Via Zoom Meeting

April 2, 2021, at 8:00 a.m.

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

Members absent: Spencer Borden

Stewards present: Kathy Angell, Beth Baryiames, Alice Galinat, Wayne Lobb, Ned Perry, Bill Robichaud, Ted Tyson, Amity (Mickey) Wilczek

Visitors: Susan Bates (liaison from the Select Board); Janet Benvenuti, Court Booth (organizer, Battle Road/Thoreau Farmhouse Connector Trail); Richard Fahlander (co-chair, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee)

Minutes: On a motion made by Bill Kemeza and seconded by Jonathan “Jay” Keyes, the minutes of the January 2021 meeting were unanimously approved by roll call vote.

STEWARD REPORTS:

Committee chairman Bob White reported that he received many emails about trails across the town that are in good shape. There were some problems too, he said. Bob noted that committee member Carlene Hempel has asked the Town to address the overflow at [Punkatasset](#) that restricts easy access around the east side of Hutchins Pond right before the Old Orchard. He and Director of Natural Resources Delia Kaye looked at it to discover that beavers are damming up the spillway. Delia said as a result, the town’s new land manager, Will Holden, has been at the site almost daily pulling off logs, but the beavers return every night and put them back. Delia noted that beavers don’t like the sound of running water and so will try to dam the source if it’s not mitigated. Delia showed an illustration of the intake pipe and the damming. Beaver Solutions, a company based in Southampton that [“specializes in human/beaver conflict.”](#) came out two weeks earlier and cleared out the basket around the intake pipe. Delia said her office and Beaver Solutions are working on a more permanent fix that both protects the beavers and allows passage on the trail.

[West Concord Park:](#) Bob noted that Steward Beth Baryiames sent pictures of trash strewn on the trail at West Concord Park. It looks as though someone is dumping trash over the edge of the parking lot at Domino Drive. Delia wondered if landscapers are dumping materials there. Carlene asks if we could install a web camera to determine the source of this chronic problem. Delia said that was possible.

[Reformatory Branch Trail:](#) Steward Ned Perry reported that a windstorm had created a large blowdown of three or four trees near Moses Pond. Steward Bill Robichaud also reported a tree down on a red trail near the cemetery property.

Mattison Field: Steward Kathy Angel reported wet and unpassable conditions along the portion of the trail that parallels the river.

White Pond Reservation: Committee member Ken Miller reported seeing a lot of bike tracks around White Pond. Delia said her office and Land Manager Will Holden are working on getting better signage for the area. She is also working with an Eagle Scout to create signs.

Old Rifle Range: Steward Alice Galinat said the trails are in good shape but noticed that bikes are causing large ruts in some areas that are wet. She also reported that a single swan has returned to Kennedy Pond.

Emerson-Thoreau Amble: Trail steward Mickey Wilczek said the trails look good but noted she will keep an eye on a wet section between Fairyland and the bridge that is susceptible to damage because of bicycles. She wondered if the committee could put up a sign that asks people to walk their bikes there. Bob said he was thinking he would ask the AMC to put a bog bridge in that area.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

Welcome New Land Manager: New employee Will Holden will be present at the next meeting. Delia said Will has done similar work previously in Barnstable (on Cape Cod), was an AmeriCorps member and worked for the Appalachian Mountain Club. Bob noted that Will has already been active in helping clear off two trees on Concord trails, including a large one at the Old Rifle Range.

White Pond Stairs from BFRT: Delia reported that the state wants to remove a set of steep stairs off the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail because there is no accessible access to town trails off the bike path. Resident Dorcas Miller, wife of committee member Ken Miller, said she is worried about people coming off the BFRT and overwhelming the trail network. She wondered about installing protective fencing along the hillside to defend against erosion. Delia mentioned there is time to work out the problem, as that section of the trail won't be built until at least 2023 because of where Sudbury is in its planning process.

Mattison Field Trail Reroute: Delia explained to the group that the Town plans to close off the center trail through Mattison Field to protect grassland nesting birds including the bobolink. She also said signs will be replaced reminding people to keep dogs leashed between April 1 and July 31 to protect the birds' habitat. Steward Kathy Angell suggested installing a new sign about nesting killdeer. As for the trail reroute, she plans to install posts with a rope across in the short term. Once the mowing stops and the grass fills in, the temporary barrier will be removed.

Battle Road/ Thoreau Farmhouse Connector Trail Update: Court Booth attended the meeting to report his group is looking at private funding to pay for the \$300,000 boardwalk across about 1,000 feet of wetland on the proposed trail, which will extend from the Thoreau Farmhouse on Virginia Road to Battle Road. His hope is the work can be done in time for a 2025 observance of National Parks.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Map dispensers, and paper vs. QR codes: Bob asked what should be done with trail map dispensers that are no longer needed. He also wondered if the town should make QR codes linking to maps at the

trailheads larger and more obvious for those who don't have a copy of Concord's [new trail book](#), "Ecology Along Concord Trails." Delia noted the town is looking at replacing the current trail head maps with sturdier material that doesn't fade.

Committee member David Clarke noted that he would like to still have paper maps available at the trails. Even a simplified version of the map would do for people who don't know the area or have cell phones to use, he said. Committee member Jay Keyes agreed. Carlene asked if we could instead install smaller laminated maps along the trails or at least halfway through to remind people where they are. Bob noted a longer discussion on the topic was warranted and said the committee will take up the issue at its next meeting.

Inter-committee communication: Visitor Tanya Gailus asked the committee if members have yet had a conversation with the town's bicycling groups. She has heard complaints about cyclists using town trails and recommended that the two groups work together to create a dialogue about mitigating options. "Otherwise, there will be a battle of wills," she cautioned.

Adjournment: On a motion made by Ken Miller and seconded by David Clarke, the meeting adjourned at 9 a.m.

Next Meeting: The next Trails Committee meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2021, at 8 a.m., on the town's Zoom channel.

Respectfully submitted,
Carlene Hempel