

TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

141 Keyes Road, 1st floor Conference Room

June 30, 2020, at 8:00 a.m.

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

Members absent: Bill Kemeza

Stewards present: David Clancy, Brian Ford, Alice Galinat, Gene Delsener, Wayne Lobb, Joe Rigali, Bill Robichaud, Margaret Romero

Visitors: Susan Bates (liaison from the Select Board); Bryan Wilson, Janet Benvenuti

Minutes: On a motion made by Spencer Borden and seconded by Ken Miller and a roll-call vote, the minutes of the February 2020 meeting were unanimously approved as amended.

STEWARD REPORTS:

[Annursnac-Baptist Book Conservation Land](#): Gerard Jansen, a new steward for the Trails Committee, reported everything looks good on the trail. He plans to cut back some of the overgrowth.

Emerson-Thoreau Amble: Wayne Lobb reported that he has cut down knotweed on the trail. David Clancy was announced as a new steward for the Town Forest.

Mattison Field: Steward Kathy Angell reported significant amounts of the invasive knotweed along ORNAC by Mattison Field. She worried specifically about the conservation sign at the side of the road now obscured by vines. Natural Resources Director Delia Kaye said she will take care of it. Wayne asked Delia how knotweed is disposed of, and Delia said her staff takes it to the invasive species dumpster at the town composting site. Bob asked what the long-term plan is for knotweed management. Delia said she is trying to work with local naturalist [Peter Alden](#) to see if he can help with removal of the invasive. She said it's a challenge because knotweed is incredibly resilient and will even grow through asphalt. She said the best technique is a herbicide stem injection, but her office tries to control it with vinegar. She said the Town likely won't eradicate the invasive but hopes to keep it under control.

Old Rifle Range Trail: Steward Alice Galinat said there is a tree down and also worried that unknown people were dumping Japanese knotweed onto Old Mill Road. Delia removed the knotweed and posted a No Dumping sign.

[Westvale-Harrington Park](#): Steward Gene Delsener questioned why there are wood chips next to the pollinator garden. Delia said the Harrington House tenants requested them for their raspberry garden.

White Pond Reservation: Trails Committee member and steward Ken Miller said White Pond is in good shape.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

Old Rifle Range Trail: Bob said he has extended the bog bridge over a ditch and cleared a tree, including removing the root ball, on the red trail where it parallels Ministerial Drive.

Baker Avenue boat launch and picnic area: Bob reported that garlic mustard, an invasive plant, is terrible there. Thirty bags were filled and hauled off but a pile of brush and the invasive bittersweet remains to be disposed of.

Town Forest: Bob reported that he and David Clancy did some work on Brister's Hill discontinuing four fall line trails and replacing with a new diagonal trail, with water bars for erosion control.

Mattison Field: A wooded trail will be added from behind the water tower, through the woods and back out onto Concord Land Conservation Trust property. Bob said he is looking for volunteers to help with the work.

New Battle Road Connector between Thoreau Farmhouse on Virginia Road and Minuteman Park Trail: Bob outlined four routes for the possible path. He said the area is very wet, with some areas in standing water. The path would include 1/ a natural surface that would be 3.5 feet wide and involve dirt ground and clearing away of brush and saplings; 2/ a puncheon walkway that would be 36- to 42 inches wide with a boardwalk on black locust logs spaced 8 feet apart and joined by 2 x 6 boards; 3/ posts and augers driven into the ground where there is standing water and 10-foot-long support beams with a 4- to 5-foot wide deck and 2 x 4 bumpers on the left and right sides. This would also be wheelchair accessible.

Alternative A: 4,515 feet total length with 3,235 feet of natural surface, 270 feet of pier bridge and 1,010 feet of puncheon boardwalk. Cost \$167,400.

Alternative B: 4,550 feet total length with 3,020 feet of natural surface, 270 feet of pier bridge and 1,260 feet of puncheon boardwalk. Cost \$174,150.

Alternative C: 3,705 feet total length with 2,270 feet of natural surface, 270 feet of pier bridge and 1,165 feet of puncheon boardwalk. Cost \$158,230.

Alternative D: 4,405 feet total length with 3,320 feet of natural surface, 510 feet of pier bridge, 400 feet of puncheon boardwalk and 175 feet of aluminum post/auger. Cost \$214,460.

A summary of the work provided to the Trails Committee suggests Alternative C is the most feasible and cost effective and has the least impact on natural resources and neighboring properties.

Mountain Bike Trail Discussion: Local resident Bryan Wilson designed and developed a network of mountain bike trails off Powdermill Road, near the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, on public property without permission. Bob and Delia reviewed the extensive trails and found some are causing erosion in an already sensitive area. In addition, the abundance of trails within the area is creating a heavy footprint of the landscape. Bryan was asked to remove the trails from Town land, and to make them impassable by covering or blocking them with vegetation and brush, with the exception of the main loop trail.

OTHER BUSINESS:

MassTrails application update: Delia reported there has been no update yet on the town's application for a MassTrails' 2020 "[Grant Round](#)" for \$34,500, which includes mostly surveying and engineering costs, to rehabilitate the Old Rifle Range main trail.

Trail maintenance: Bob mentioned a visit to the February meeting by Pam Howell, a resident of Annursnac Hill Road, who worried that the Town is removing too many natural elements such as rocks and roots on woodland trails. He asked for further comment on the issue. Trail Steward Bill Robichaud said he believes the Trails Committee should always maintain trails with bikers in mind. Steward Kathryn Angell said she appreciates walking on smooth surfaces and believes "trippers" should be removed. Committee member Carlene Hempel said she believes the rocks and roots should remain untouched, especially to benefit walkers and runners in the winter who need toeholds to remain upright on the ice. Delia said that in general, the point of the trails is for people to be able to use them, but that over-engineering is problematic. She said to remove too many of the natural elements can cause erosion because there is nothing to diffuse water flow. She suggested doing as little as possible to manipulate trail surfaces. Bob said he intends for the Trails Committee to be mindful of this guidance when trails are built and maintained in the future.

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

Next Meeting: The next Trails Committee virtual meeting is scheduled for July 28, 2020, at 8 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carlene Hempel