

Concord Conservation Commission
Trails Subcommittee Meeting
January 8, 2020

The Concord Conservation Commission's Trails Subcommittee met at 5:15 pm on January 8, 2020 in the second floor conference room in City Hall, 41 Green St.

Attendees: Rob Knight, Chairperson; Tim Pifer, Vice Chair; Gail Page, Secretary; Jeff Lewis, Conservation Commission representative; David Ross, Ron Klemarczyk, Consultant Forester

Absent: Rik Van Riel (alt.), Fran Philippe, Mike Showalter, Rob Talmadge, Greg Mannesto

Staff: Beth Fenstermacher, Assistant City Planner

Guests: Jim Owers, Conservation Commission Vice Chair, Matt Bowser of New England Mountain Bikers Association (NEMBA); Aaron Monier, Judy Barrett Weatherbee, Rebecca Ross, Megan MacMullin

1. Minutes: December minutes approved as amended. (First item in trail maintenance change Murray trail to Upper Trail)

2. Trail Walks:

- December's hike at the Forest Society and Merrill Park lead by Gail had 19 participants.
- January's hike is set for the 25th. Fran will bring hikers to Audubon Society property and a portion of the West End Farm Trail and give some history of the sawmill at Turkey Pond run by an all-female crew in the late 1930s.
- On February 15th Rob Knight plans a hike at Broken Ground from the Curtisville Rd start point.
- Dave Ross will lead an OLLI class of hikers at Carter Hill on Feb. 26.
- Gail will plan a hike in March.
- Rik Van Riel previously stated his intention to prepare a guide to city trails appropriate for cross-country skiing. Beth will follow-up with Rik.

3. Trail Maintenance and Reporting: None.

4. Knowlton Woods/Oak Hill proposed trail:

Jim Owers and Matt Bowser presented plans for a trail system on one large and one small plot of contiguous land on the north side of Oak Hill known as Knowlton Woods and the Murray lot, respectively. The Murray lot is the land one views from Swope Slope on Oak Hill. The proposed trail would connect to the Oak Hill trail system adding 1.9 miles to the current 6.9 miles. Ron Klemarczyk and Matt Bowser have explored the land and mapped out the proposed location of a loop trail, avoiding a deer yard and wet areas and a steeply sloped area. The property has numerous stone walls and an existing ATV trail. The loop trail would incorporate this ATV trail into the system. Ron K. anticipates the need for one bridge.

The committee discussed who would be the likely users of this new trail. Matt and his volunteers anticipate mainly advanced mountain bikers, similar to the bikers who use the challenging Oak Hill trails, as well as hikers. An old farmhouse foundation and cellar hole will be a point of interest at the north end of this trail. At this point the committee reviewed the Trail Criteria checklist for the proposed trail which listed many positive criteria including linking the Oak Hill trails to Hot Hole Pond Road, possibilities for expanded

parking, access to special places, and providing access to property acquired for public use. No real negatives: just one bridge; trail to be routed to avoid a high value wetland and wildlife habitat; good emergency access from Hot Hole Pond Road and from the fire tower access road.

Discussed parking. Beth Fenstermacher expressed concern that use of the Fish and Game parking area would require people to walk 200 yards along the road to the trailhead. Jeff thought visitors would be more likely to park on the road than walk from the Fish and Game lot. Beth prefers developing a parking area at the log yard location. The project managers will study the best solution for parking and present a proposal for parking at a future meeting.

Rob thanked Matt and Jim for the time they had put into planning the trail and suggested that since the presentation was so detailed and complete, the Trails Committee could vote on the trail without a trail walk. Jeff moved that the committee approve proceeding with the proposed Knowlton trails, subject to approval of the Conservation Commission. Motion was approved unanimously. Jim Owers and Matt Bowser will be project managers. A joint trail walk will be done with the Conservation Commission in the spring.

Grooming Broken Ground trails

Rob asked Matt Bowser to tell the committee about winter trail grooming at Broken Ground. NEMBA has a machine that can groom the snow to a 24" width for mountain bikes. The grooming may also be advantageous for skiers and snowshoers. Bare-boot hikers tend to spoil the groomed trail. Initially only Rys Way was going to be groomed but Matt has been grooming all the Broken Ground trails as a courtesy. Trail users seem to appreciate the grooming. No complaints have been received. Rob said we should continue to get feedback from winter trail users.

Trails Master Plan

Beth announced that there will be a work group meeting for the Trails Committee, Conservation Commission, and Planning Board at 5:30 on January 22 at 5:30. The public meeting will be January 28.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30.