

Concord Conservation Commission
Trails Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2023

Attending: Chairperson Scott Daniels; Vice Chair, Fran Philippe; Secretary, Gail Page; Rob Knight; Greg Mannesto; David Ross; Rik Van Riel
City Planning Div. representative, Beth Fenstermacher
Consultant City Forester, Ron Klemarczyk
Conservation Commission representative Kris Tardiff
Absent: Judy Weatherbee, Rob Tallmadge, and alternate Erin Waters
Guests: Mark Redman (trail steward); Aaron Monier; Meredith Cooley and Christi Benney of Concord Greenspace

Agenda:

1. Minutes for November 2022 were approved. (No meeting in December).

Please note that Gail is resigning as recording secretary but will remain on the subcommittee. The Trails Committee extends its sincere gratitude and thanks to Gail Page for her service as the Committee's Secretary for the past several years. Gail has expertly recorded the Committee's conversations and deliberations and tracked our many projects and accomplishments with clear explanations and detailed writing. Gail will remain on the Committee to continue the great work she does in other roles.

2. Trail Maintenance and Reporting:

- a. Ron Klemarczyk's report is as follows: Following the wind storm of 12/23 he removed many downed trees from the trails at Oak Hill, Merrill Park, Batchelder Mill, and the Swope to Winant Trail. In addition, he cleaned up the skidder road at Knowlton Woods and cleaned ditches for drainage at Oak Hill. He replaced the broken sign at the corner of Runnells Rd and Horse hill Rd and reinstalled "Private Property" signs on the Raymond property. He notes that trail signs on Knowlton Woods trails have been vandalized and will need to be replaced. A timber sale is proposed on the Bunton/WEFT in the summer and fall removing hemlocks that are suspect to the wooly adelgid disease.

Fran reported a downed tree on both the Winant orange and Blue trails.

Rob K. removed a downed tree on the WEFT and rerouted a portion of the Weston Trail off WEFT to skirt a permanent wet area.

Greg M. reported trouble with a landowner's dogs threatening him near Currier Rd. The landowner claimed Greg was on private property but this is not so.

Mark Redman report from District 5 Rd to Carter Hill there are many blowdowns. Ron K mentioned that he is aware of the blowdowns, but is waiting to work on the trail reroute on the northwest portion of the Ross farm to move the trail away from the Ross's field.

3. The Broken Ground to Oak Hill proposed trail runs along the boundary onto the Hoag family land for a distance to avoid a wet area. Scott has developed a letter to the Hoag siblings asking their permission to partly route the trail on their property. A similar letter will be needed for the Ekstrom land if the Hoags support the proposal. Gail raised concern about the wisdom of creating this trail due to its inevitable impact on wildlife in this otherwise undisturbed land. Also, its length (3.5 miles one way) means that it will be mostly used by bicyclers unless hikers spot cars at each end. Ron pointed out that there is already a snowmobile trail on the eastern side of this land. Scott will proceed with the letter to the Hoags and the subcommittee will await the letter's result. Upon confirmation of landowner support, Scott will continue on through the criteria checklist to determine if the trail is feasible.

4. The subcommittee reviewed 2022's goals. Several are to be moved to 2023 for continued work. The goal of making more of our trails ADA compliant drew discussion. Previously compliant trails have since become too bumpy with roots for disabled persons to use. Funding from a non-profit would be welcome as the cost for this project is considerable. Manchester's Cedar Swamp ADA trail was assisted by The Nature Conservancy. Several of the city parks have paved paths usable by wheelchairs but none are in wooded areas.

5. The city has received a request to make Broken Ground off limits to hunters. After discussion, the members expressed their opinions that it should remain open for hunting, recognizing that hunters are a valuable source of support for the city trails and that the tradition of "multi-use" for the trails has worked well in general. The Committee's recommendation will be forwarded to the Conservation Commission for their consideration.

6. Fran P. reported that the people she meets at the beaver pond in Broken Ground have inquired about the recent sale of the land across Curtisville Rd from the pond and whether the new owners will be allowed to develop the land in a way that disrupts the stream running through it. It is apparently used by the beaver to gather food. Beth pointed out that zoning laws require protection of streams on both sides and the City will be reviewing any plans. Abutters notifications will be sent out if/when a plan moves forward, and the Conservation Commission will have the opportunity to comment on the plan.

7. Other Business:

a. Upcoming hikes

Gail and Fran will report to Beth on scheduling hikes in January and February for the public.

b. Judy Weatherbee has resigned from the subcommittee but plans to continue to steward her trails. David Ross also is resigning his alternate position.

The Trails Committee greatly appreciates and thanks Judy Weatherbee for her time, efforts, and years of service as a member of the Trails Committee. Judy is the first person at trail building and maintenance days and always willing to put her shoulder to the wheel to get our projects completed. Although we are sad to lose her as a Committee Member, we are thankful that Judy will still be involved with the Committee as the Steward of Oak Hill trails.

We also greatly thank David Ross for his service to the committee as an Alternate Committee Member for the past several years. David's love of the Concord trails and all outdoor activities including hiking, biking and trail running is contagious and inspirational. David's hard work on many of our trail projects has been important to their success and completion, and we will miss his smile, experience, input, and always helpful ideas at our committee meetings.

Guests Aaron Monier and Christi Benney expressed their interest to join the subcommittee. Scott will follow up.

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm.

Next meeting is Feb. 8, 2023

Respectfully Submitted, Gail Page, recording secretary