

Concord Conservation Commission
Trails Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2023

Present: Fran Philippe, Acting Chair; Greg Mannesto; Gail Page; Rebecca Ross; Rik Van Riel (alt); Aaron Monier (alt); Jeff Lewis, Conservation Commission Liaison; Ron Klemarczyk, Consultant City Forester

City Planning Division staff: Beth Fenstermacher, Carl Matson

Absent: Erin Waters(alt)

Guests: Jim Owers (Conservation Commission Vice Chair), Matt Bowser (NEMBA)

Meeting was called to order at 5:15 PM by Ms. Philippe, Acting Chair

1. Minutes for April 12, 2023 were approved as written
2. Trail Maintenance and Reporting
 - a. Ron Klemarczyk report: Fallen trees were cleared at O'Reilly-Fleetham trails, he also noted water running down the trail as the ditches were filled. He reminded trail stewards to look for this condition and report if they see water running down a trail, that is a sign that something is not right. He did additional work on the Swope parking lot and noted the grass is growing in, but someone illegally dumped yard waste in that area. He also closed off the rogue trail connecting Swope loop to Long Pond Road using brush. He filled a hole from a tree that fell over the winter, and cleared a tree on the Swope-Winant connector. He removed a tree from the emergency access trail at Broken Ground. He noted a sign on the Marsh Loop trail that has become de-laminated and will need to be replaced.
 - b. Carl Matson report: Carl noted the Coeyman Park sign at the Batchelder Mill Rd trailhead is rotting and should be replaced. Members were not sure who placed the sign there and whether it is an official designation. Hold off for now. He will re-paint other trailhead signs, and will connect with Fran to get the brown and yellow paint. He reported about 6 trees down on the Hoit Marsh trail. He found a trail sign on a post that was removed at Rolfe Park. No one knew of any reason the sign was removed, he will place it back.
3. New trail proposal – Broken Ground NEMBA trail

Matt Bowser gave a presentation about NEMBA and the proposed trail. Jim Owers presented a wildlife report and copies of the trail criteria checklist. Jim noted that there are no plans to make this area a “mountain bike park”, this will likely be the last trails on this property. He then read through the criteria as members provided comment. He stated that the trail will provide more access to recreation for the underserved communities in the Heights. Fran commented that the residents in that area most likely don't own mountain bikes. Matt said that Trek of Concord is currently developing a youth outreach program for youth of these underserved communities access to bicycles. Further, S&W sports provides free bikes to low income residents throughout the city. Further, the trails are designed to be multi-use, so people won't have to own a bike to use the trails. Rik commented that these trails are the least technical trails, so users won't need a nice bike to use them. And also, they will be good cross-country trails.

Rebecca noted that the criteria “provides access to special places” should probably be a “no” since the trail is not to a specific special feature. While there may be nice views, this is too vague and not necessarily any more special than the natural features on other trails.

Regarding the reference to one of the goals for purchasing the Broken Ground land to protect habitat..." Fran noted that more trails on the property does not necessarily meet that goal. Jim stated that there was more to the goal – including stating “the range of recreational uses”. Rebecca noted that placing the trail on an already existing road is in line with the goal to protect habitat.

Regarding “reduces traffic on heavily used trails”, Jim noted that this trail can be used as an alternate to the Marsh Loop trail during the wet season. By constructing the propose trail, the impact will be spread out, reducing the overall load on each trail. This led to a discussion about potentially closing the eastern portion of the Marsh loop trail.

Regarding “has community support”, Gail noted that the information provided by Jim is more general City-wide, and not site specific. A Public meeting specific to these trails is needed to determine this support.

Due to time constraints, Fran recommended that the discussion be continuee to the June 14th meeting.

4. Other business:
 - a. Spring trail checks – Rik is working on creating a Google form and will be sending out to stewards. It was noted that the form should have a note to check for water on trails, per Ron’s earlier point.
 - b. Guided hikes – members of the Conservation Commission have offered to lead hikes through the summer. Next hike is 5/13 at NH Audubon; 6/3 at Oak Hill trails/Swope Slope; July is pending; August 13th, location TBD.
 - c. Fran suggested a bittersweet removal work day in June at Broken Ground.
 - d. Fran asked for volunteers to take minutes at future meetings. It was decided members will take turns, and rotate each month. Aaron volunteered to take minutes in June.

Meeting adjourned at 6:28.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Fenstermacher