

Concord Conservation Commission  
Trails Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes  
June 14, 2023

Present: Fran Philippe, Acting Chair; Gail Page; Rebecca Ross; Aaron Monier (alt); Jeff Lewis, Conservation Commission Liaison;  
City Planning Division staff: Beth Fenstermacher  
Absent: Greg Mannesto; Rik Van Riel (alt); Erin Waters(alt)  
Guests: Kris Tardiff (Conservation Commission Vice Chair), Jim Owers (Conservation Commission Vice Chair), Councilor Stacey Brown, Matt Bowser (NEMBA), Kristi Ausfresser, Mark Cheever, Mark Davie, Dan Geiger

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

1. Minutes for May 10, 2023 were approved as written
2. New Trail Proposals
  - a. Proposed NEMBA Trail Broken Ground – Checklist review (continued from May meeting)
    - i. Wildlife Study

Dan Geiger was present to explain wildlife report done on area. He provided his credentials: Certified wetland scientist; wildlife biologist; has done work for the city of Concord; approved by NH Fish and Game as able to conduct Wildlife studies. He reached out to DES who says no permit is required because project is below threshold of Alteration of Terrain permit and no wetlands present. Professionally, he recommends we be proactive and work with them and get their input which is why NH Fish and Game was involved. Endangered species identified in the area include smooth green snake, nighthawk, and turtles. However, the proposed trail area hasn't had a history of animal corridors for these species. He looked at what steps can be taken to ensure minimal impact of project. Bobcat scat and coyote fur have been observed in wildlife corridors but not in the area of proposed trail. Kiosk at base of trail system informing public of sensitive species was suggested by Dan. Marsh Loop Trail is a sensitive area and Fish and Game may want management of bikes on that particular trail. Safety concern of separation of walkers and bikers.

Rebecca Ross asked for clarification on who hired Dan and who owns the land where the proposed trail is located. Dan responded that NEMBA hired him because they are funding the project but it's still City property which is why he's taking the steps he's taken getting NH Fish and Game and DES on board based on his experience.

Gail Page mentioned the rhetoric of the presentation makes it seem like it won't be a multi-use trail for both bikers and hikers.

Fran Philippe commented that monitoring the Marsh Loop Trail will be difficult to enforce. Matt Bowser commented that the Knowlton Hill trail has an alternative route for hikers to reduce biker/hiker interactions, and it has been very successful.

Jeff Lewis commented that it's valuable to get DES and Fish and Game involved and wondered if a mountain bike will cause more harm than a hiker with dog off leash.

Dan suggested that the signage and verbiage at the kiosk with steps to reduce impact would be the best way to circumvent concerns about mountain bikes using the Marsh Loop Trail. Educational opportunity as opposed to ordinance.

Jeff asked if Dan's report details the input from DES and Fish and Game. Jeff commented that this may set a precedent for future proposals, and this level of analysis was not completed for Ry's Way.

Fran asked for clarification of who funded Dan's report and Jim Owers said he personally paid for Dan's wildlife report because he wants to move project forward. Matt said that NEMBA would be happy to reimburse him. Fran wanted to ensure this wasn't a conflict of interest.

Beth clarified that the reason this was not completed for Ry's Way is that the trail checklist did not yet exist, and that Fish and Game just recently started reporting on trails impact on wildlife.

Mark Cheever commented that rural turnstiles can be used to defer mountain bikes. This method has been utilized by AMC.

Stacey Brown commented about an initiative she is working on the get bikes for New American children. She stated that they mostly live in the Loudon Rd. area, which can be dangerous for bikers, but Broken Ground Trails can be accessed via Sugarball which will provide access to green space for lots of lower income families on the Heights. She thinks it's also a great opportunity to educate about conservation.

- ii. Trailhead parking - No known issues. Jim reported that Unitil created a gravel construction lay down area that could potentially be used as an expanded parking lot. Beth will see if the city can request this area be used for parking once finished. Land is Unitil property.
- iii. Unusually Difficult for Police and Fire to Service the Area – Determined this was not an issue for this particular trail.
- iv. Next steps

- Jim Owers proposed the subcommittee vote to move on to the next step for the trail proposal to go to the Conservation Commission for consideration.
- Rebecca Ross said she can't make a motion for it to move forward without more information responding to the concerns already raised by the subcommittee
- Fran proposed the trails committee make a motion to move the project forward with more discussion points documented and included to Conservation Committee.
- Rebecca Ross thought it was important to send along minutes and discussion to Conservation Commission before we move the project forward. Concerned Public Support has not been specific to this proposed trail.
- Beth recommended that we gather more public input from the neighboring property owners.
- Jim Owers said that the minutes should be sufficient to get the discussion of the trails subcommittee to the conservation committee.

Ms. Ross made a motion that the trail proposal was worth exploring further and to move the proposal to the Conservation Commission with the inclusion of the Trails subcommittee discussions, including concerns regarding impacts to wildlife (both from the new trail and

existing trails), as well as the question of whether there is public support. Gail Page second, the vote was 3 to 1 in favor. Motion passed.

- b. Richards Community Forest - Jeff Lewis has spearheaded this project. Walked the property with Ron and family representatives. He's taking the criteria and will bring that to the meeting next month. A site visit will be scheduled.
3. Other business:
- a. Spring trail checks – Rik will be sending out requests to stewards for trail checks. Matt Bowser reported that he completed a check of the Oak Hill and Ry's Way trails, and all is good.
  - b. Request to place bench on Swope Park trail Penacook Lake overlook  
Works Cafe employees want to donate a new bench on Swope Trail in honor of Don Bruggerman. They will replace the existing bench, have gone through Five Rivers Conservation Trust and will be funding the project. Subcommittee members had no concern with this request.

All other agenda items postponed for discussion in July.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40.

Respectfully submitted,  
Aaron Monier