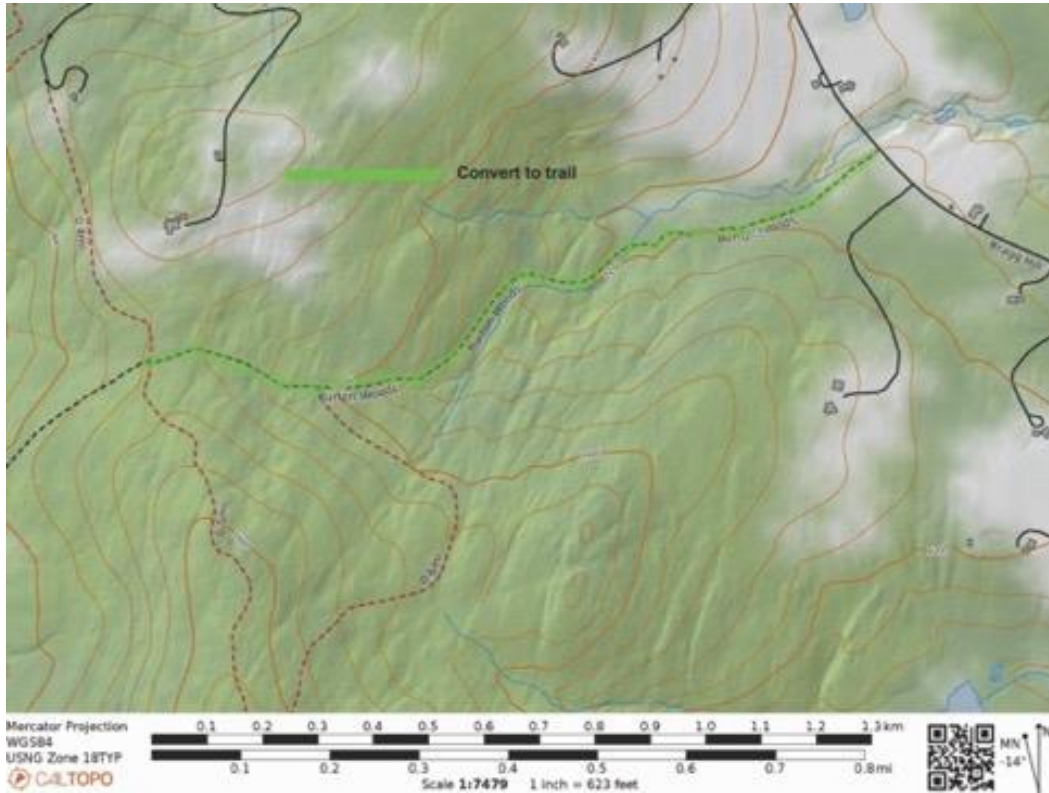

DRAFT MEMORANDUM

TO: NORWICH SELECTBOARD
FROM: NORWICH TRAILS COMMITTEE
SUBJECT: REQUEST: RECLASSIFY PORTION OF BURTON WOODS ROAD AS TRAIL
DATE: JULY 8, 2021
CC: NICK KREMBS, STEPHEN FLANDERS, LIZ BURDETTE (UVMBA CHAIRPERSON)

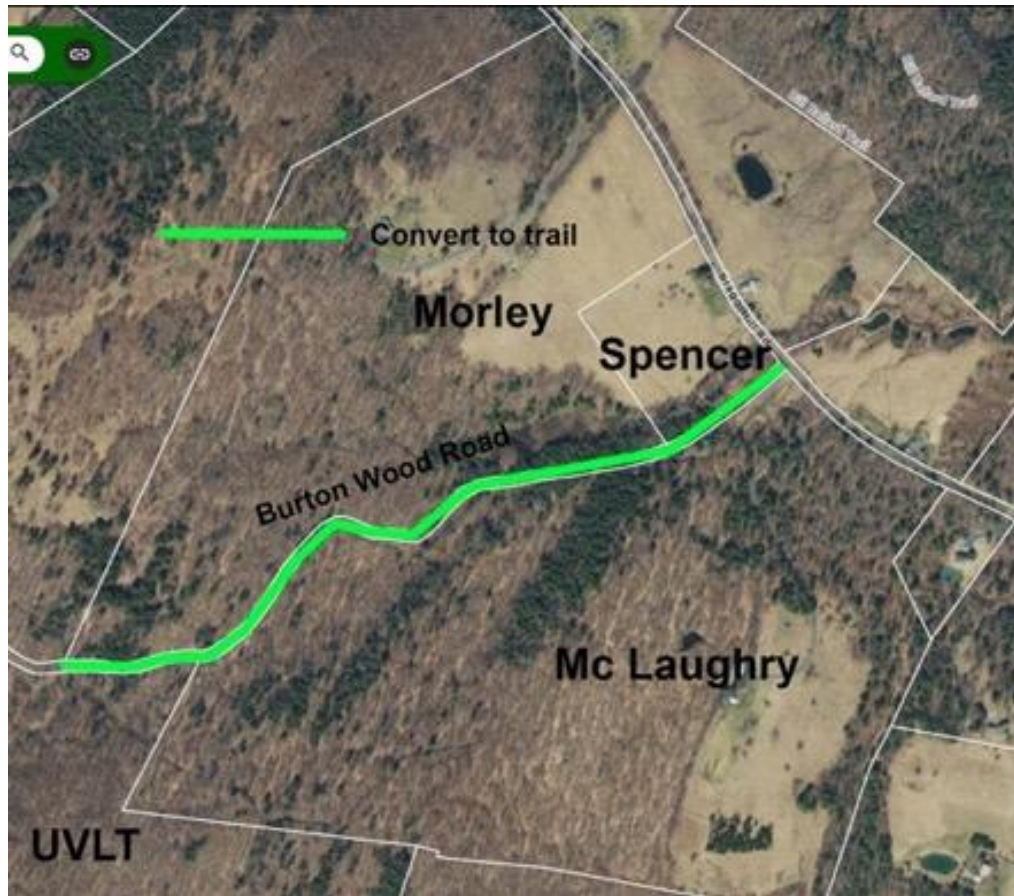
1. *Request* – The Norwich Trails Committee requests that the selectboard change the classification of the portion of Burton Woods Road between Bragg Hill Road and the ridge of Griggs Mountain from “Fourth-Class Road”, which allows the use of motorized vehicles, to “Trail”, where such vehicles are prohibited without a permit. The western side of the ridge would remain open to motorized traffic.



Site of proposed conversion to trail from Bragg Hill to the ridge of Griggs Mountain

2. *Justification* – The right of way (ROW) is steep and wet. Occasional recreational vehicle traffic exacerbates the erosion and prevents mitigation of damage. Conversion to a trail will allow implementation of sustainable erosion control measures that will greatly increase the usefulness of the trail to cyclists and hikers. More details are described in the **Image Gallery**.

3. *Abutters* –There are four abutting properties to the section of ROW proposed for conversion:
- South side: Susan F. McLaughry Revokable Trust, 1093 Bragg Hill Road.
 - South side, near ridge: Upper Valley Land Trust, 19 Buck Road, Hanover, NH 03755
 - North side, on Bragg Hill Road: Catherine Spencer, 1141 Bragg Hill Road.
 - North side, west of Spencer to the ridge: Benjamin and Christianna Morley, 1219 Bragg Hill Road.



Parcels adjacent to proposed trail conversion

4. *Impact* –Conversion to a trail would have the following effects.
- The section does not connect to properties requiring motor vehicle access.
 - It is part of a variety of loops that serve cyclists and hikers.
 - The road beyond the west side of the trail serves several camps, which gain access from Tigertown Road and would be unaffected by the conversion.
 - It would allow sustainable erosion control measures that would benefit cyclists and hikers.
 - Forestry operations using the ROW would be subject to a permit that could require repairing any damage to drainage structures.

5. *Statute* – [19 V.S.A. § 304](#) grants the selectboard the power to “lay out, alter, classify, and discontinue town highways”. [19 V.S.A. § 708 \(a\)](#) allows the selectboard to initiate laying out, altering, reclassifying, or discontinuing highways on its own. [19 V.S.A. § 709](#) requires the board to:
- Appoint a time and date both for examining the premises and hearing the persons interested.
 - Give 30 days' notice to the petitioners, and to persons owning or interested in lands through which the highway may pass or abut, of the time when they will inspect the site and receive testimony.
 - Give notice to any municipal planning commission in the town, post a copy of the notice in the office of the town clerk, and cause a notice to be published in a local newspaper of general circulation in the area not less than ten days before the time set for the hearing.
 - Give notice by certified mail sent to the official residence of the person(s) required to be notified.
6. *Ordinance* – The Norwich [ordinance relating to use of trails](#) says:
- Trail rights of way may be used for hiking, walking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, horseback riding and other similar activities all at the risk of the user.
 - The operation of a motor vehicle is prohibited on any Trail, as defined herein, unless the operator of the motor vehicle has a valid permit issued by the Norwich Selectboard.
 - No person may alter or injure the right of way of any Trail by obstructing or diverting a stream, water course or sluice, or by dragging logs or timber or any other objects within the right of way or cutting brush or trees, or altering drainage or grades and slopes, or any other modifications within the Trail right of way without first having received a permit from the Selectboard.
7. *Draft motion* – “... to initiate re-classification of the portion of Burton Woods Road from Bragg Hill Road to the crest of the ridge of Griggs Mountain from “Fourth-Class Road” to “Trail”, to be named “Burton Woods Trail”, pursuant to the authority granted by 19 V.S.A. § 708 (a) and after completing the steps required by 19 V.S.A. § 709.”

Image Gallery

Images were shot on 20 June 2021 during semi-drought conditions.



Entry from Bragg Hill Road is narrower than a vehicle



Traffic observed was mostly mountain bikes.



Lower section is normally poorly drained.



The "road" passes through a beaver pond.



Multiple sections of ROW are wet and drain through tire ruts.



Steep, rocky sections compromise vehicle passage.



This stream crossing near the ridge is usually much wetter.



The junction at the top of the proposed re-classification



The trail leading south at the junction



The trail leading north at the junction