



Notes

Norwich Trails volunteers monthly meeting

7 pm, September 1, 2021

Location: Norwich Historical Society

Attendees:

Norwich Trails Committee (NTC) members absent: Craig Layne, David Hubbard, and Cody Williams.

Volunteers and members of the public: Nick Krembs (facilitator), Stephen Flanders (scribe), Jim Faughnan, Elisabeth Hammer, Doug Hardy, John McCormick, Sean Ogle, and Cathie Redpath

AGENDA

1. *Approval of agenda*—Krembs opened the meeting at 7:05. There were no proposed amendments to the agenda.
2. *Comments from those present*—None.

Trail infrastructure

3. *Reports on recent trail blockages and actions taken or planned*
 - a. Miscellaneous—Faughnan and Hardy reported clearing miscellaneous minor windfalls on the Bill Ballard Trail and Gile Mountain Trail.
 - b. August 15th Work Day—Not discussed.¹
4. *Proposed work for Gile Mountain Trail*
 - a. Repair hemlock steps: Faughnan reported that the hemlock steps, part way up the Gile Mountain Trail, are deteriorated and hazardous. He emphasized that it would be straightforward to remove and replace the existing timbers. He recommended using pressure-treated replacement materials. He noted that the most difficult aspect of the work would be carrying in pre-cut pieces. It was agreed to schedule the work for the September 19th work day.
 - b. Address parking lot drainage
5. *Scope of Lower-Ballard Trail work*
 - a. Work to be completed: Faughnan reported that on August 23 Peter Guillette, assisted by Faughnan and Hubbard, repaired the washout on the beginning section of the lower Ballard Trail. Using his skid steerer, Guillette transported 3-inch erosion stone followed by ditch gravel to fill in and dressed off the washout in the trail and built up the trail at the site of the second foot bridge, where he built a berm. The site of the first bridge will require further hand work and engineering to avoid the overland flow problems that it incurred in the winter of 2021.

¹ On August 15, Jim Faughnan and Bob Fiskens did some chain-sawing and lopping branches on areas of Parcel 5 that were over hanging and encroaching on the trail.

- b. Other work: Ogle reported substantial progress on benching sections of the Bill Ballard Trail and completion of benching work on the Brown Schoolhouse Trail.
6. *Trail kiosks*
- a. Update progress: Faughnan reported that the first kiosk has not been built yet.
 - b. Identify locations: The first kiosk will be positioned at the Brown Schoolhouse Bridge. Others discussed were small-format kiosks for the top of the Brown Schoolhouse Trail, top of the Bill Ballard Trail, Burton Woods Trail and Blue-Ribbon Trail.
7. *Trail kiosk signage*
- a. Update progress: Flanders reported that Williams had surveyed existing signage and concluded that no essential elements were missing from the proposed layout. Those present did not express a preference to include trail etiquette in the layout. They also expressed no opinions contrary to the editorial changes that Williams proposed. Flanders expects to provide a prototype for the October meeting.
 - b. Identify locations: The first new kiosk will be positioned at the Brown Schoolhouse Bridge.
8. *Work days to schedule*
- a. September 19th– The proposed work is to replace rotted risers on the Gile Mountain Trail with pressure-treated 6x6s, as discussed in 4 a. Additionally, to dig a drainage ditch to divert one of the hillside waterways off the trail on the Lower Ballard Trail.
 - b. October 17th– Work on Grand Canyon ford.
9. *Appalachian Trail Corridor*
- a. No decision about trail authorizations has been received from the US Forest Service.
 - b. Hardy reported that he had been in contact with Christopher Mattrick, district ranger and deciding official. Mattrick conveyed to him strong criteria for endorsement of abutting landowners, regarding trail connectivity across their properties. Hardy noted that abutting landowner acceptance of mountain bike traffic has been in decline. Questions were raised about the Barred Owl Trail and the former route of the Appalachian Trail above the former Happy Hill Cabin Site. Because Mattrick has been temporarily assigned to western fire duty, Hardy doesn't expect a rapid decision.
10. *Proposal for conversion of Burton Woods Road segment to a trail*
- a. Flanders reported that Jane LeMasurier, Craig Layne and he had walked the trail on August 23 to assess the improvements needed for multiple types of trail users. The conclusion was that the existing diversions of trail up the side of the roadbed were within the right of way and that a limited number of drainage improvements would contribute to drying out the upper part of the trail. The three agreed that it would be possible to build water bars that could withstand ATV traffic, but not road vehicle traffic.
 - b. Review draft NTC memo to Selectboard: Those present noted that it would be beneficial to engage the property owners on the road, who had expressed concern about redesignation of Burton Woods Road as a trail. The discussion would be about how to include off-road motorized traffic, while avoiding the potential for damage to drainage structures by such vehicles, as pick-up trucks. Hardy agreed to make contact and initiate the discussion, and would include those trail volunteers who might be available to participate. Based on the input from the concerned abutters, the selectboard memo may be revised.

- c. Review of parking lot proposal: Redpath agreed to engage the landowners of the property adjacent to the Bragg Hill Road end of Burton Woods Road to determine whether parking could be allowed on a trial basis in the currently established area with a sign defining private property and a path leading through the bordering trees onto the Burton Woods right of way.

11. *Planning scope of work on Lower Ballard Trail*—Ogle gave a briefing on the flood robustness of the Upper Valley Trails Alliance’s proposed Scope of work, based on a conversation with a civil engineer. The upshot was that if flood water velocity was along the surface of the proposed in-ground structure, it would probably result in a loss of material in the topmost layers. Otherwise, such a structure was likely to be resistant to damage from flooding.

Financial

12. *Planning for FY 2022-23 budget: Parking*—Draft report to Norwich selectboard to recommend for Trails line item:

- a. Gile Mountain: Endorse parking lot expansion: Those present identified this as the highest priority. Flanders reported that Jeff Goodrich suggested that he could provide some pro-bono consulting time to come up with a budgetary figure for parking lot expansion.
- b. Elm Street: Flanders characterized this as something that could be accomplished within the scope of the normal DPW budget.
- c. Happy Hill Road: Those present decided to wait another year and see how better definition of parking by improved signage would affect the available space.

Other

13. *Review draft proposal for parking signage at Happy Hill Road*—After some discussion, those present endorsed the approach proposed in the discussion material to rely on a single “No Parking” sign with an arrow in place of the existing signage.

14. *Prepare for Norwich Historical Society September 11 Community Organization Fair*—Faughnan reported that a variety of informational materials were being solicited for an event from 1 to 3 pm.

15. *Items for October meeting*

- a. Schedule construction and installation of kiosks
- b. Confirm signage for kiosks
- c. Status of Heyl from Bragg Hill Road

16. Items for future meetings

17. Adjourn