



# TOWN OF GROTON

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Groton Trails Committee

## Monthly Meeting Minutes

20 January 2015, Legion Hall

### Attendees:

Chairman	Paul Funch	X
Vice Chair		
Members:	Dave Burnham	
	Wendy Good	
	Olin Lathrop	X recorder
	Stephen Legge	X
	Dave Minott	X
	Jim Molaskey	
	David Pitkin	X
	Jason Remillard	X
	Scott Stathis	
	John Wiesner	X

### Visitors:

**Call to order:** Paul called the meeting to order at 19:37.

**Releases signed:** The annual volunteer agreement and liability releases with the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) and the Groton Conservation Trust (GCT) were signed.

**Previous minutes:** The minutes from the 16 December 2014 meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

**Guided hikes:** The guided hike in Shepley Hills led by Olin and jointly sponsored by the Trails Committee and the AMC on 11 Jan had 14 participants. Olin will be leading a joint TC and AMC hike on 15 Feb in McLains Woods. Dave M will be leading TC hikes on 19 April on The Throne, and 7 June on the Indian Rock Trail in the GCT Gamlin Crystal Spring property.

**Conservation forum:** Paul reported that the first annual Groton Conservation Forum is scheduled for 11 Feb 19:00 at the Groton Country Club. This is a joint meeting of conservation organizations in town. It is organized by the Conservation Commission, the Groton Conservation Trust, and the Trails Committee, with all conservation-related groups invited.

**Eagle scout projects:** Olin reported that he showed Nick Boggiano the wet area in the saddle of Gibbet Hill, and a large flooded area of the current path/road in the GCT Throne Hill property. Nick will consider these options and get back to Paul about what he'd like to take on.

Paul reported that Blake Abraham has completed his planned bridge in the Flavell Crossing property.

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Paul reported that Will Premru is progressing with building a trail off of Paugus Trail (a road) into the Groton Woods Conservation Area. The previous connection was unofficial, passing thru a house lot that will be developed.

Paul reported that Ben Hawk is investigating his options and has not chosen a particular project yet.

Paul reported that nothing has been recently heard from Alexander Jeffries, so his status is unclear.

**Regional trails map:** Paul passed out copies of the just-released first trails map of the Montachusett region. This region roughly covers north-central MA with Groton at the eastern end. The map was produced by the Montachusett Regional Trails Coalition (MRTC).

**Trail signs:** Olin reported that he ordered three 12"x6" aluminum signs from the MA Dept of Corrections (MassCor). This first order is a test of the process, but two of the signs are intended for intersections on the Bruce Clements Trail if successful. The third sign is a resolution test, which is intended for guidance in making future signs that may include line drawings such as maps.

**Town annual report:** Steve will be writing the Trails Committee submission to the 2014 annual Town Report. He collected a list of projects suggested by committee members for possible mention in the report.

**Accessible trail in J H Rich forest:** Paul reported much work, meetings, filings, and communications with various official bodies in the last month in attempting to progress with the handicapped-accessible trail in the J Harry Rich State Forest. This trail is planned to be about ¼ mile long from Nod Road to the Nashua River.

A major issue is that there may be historical artifacts from the early settlement of Groton buried near that location. To get approval, the soil must not be dug in, nor excessively loaded such that artifacts may be crushed. To comply with these restrictions, the current plan is to form the trail bed by adding crushed rock on top of the existing soil. The logistics of spreading the crushed rock are complicated, since heavy machinery can only drive where the rock has already been spread, not on bare soil.

Paul reported that based on two estimates received so far, the total project cost is expected to be about \$31k. A Recreational Trails Program grant for that amount would pay for 80%, with Groton having to pay for or provide in-kind labor or donations of the remaining 20%. The grant proposal is due by 2 Feb.

Letters of support for the project have been received from the Seven Hills Pediatric Center, the Commission on Accessibility, and the Selectmen. Paul also reported that DCR (the property owner) is very supportive of the project.

**Web site:** Jason and Dave P reported on various updates and map fixes over the last month. A discussion was held on if/how recommendations should be made for certain activities, like hiking, cross country skiing, horse riding, water sports, vistas, etc.

**Letters of support:** Paul proposed sending a letter to the Community Preservation Committee in support of the Commission on Accessibility's application for \$6k to study and itemize specific

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projects for better accessibility to various town parks and other properties. The proposal was approved by unanimous vote.

Paul proposed sending a letter to the Community Preservation Committee in support of the Conservation Commission's application for \$200k for the Conservation Fund. The proposal was approved by unanimous vote.

Paul proposed sending a letter to the Squannacook River Runners to thank them for their \$1k donation to the Trails Committee Gift Account. The proposal was approved by unanimous vote.

**Gift account:** Paul reported that the current balance in the Trails Committee Gift Account held by the town was \$4,720.37.

**Groton's Freedom's Way event:** Paul reported progress in planning Groton's part of the monthly series of events coordinated by Freedom's Way. Groton will offer various individual events on Sunday 31 May 2015, themed "Gifts of the Glaciers". These will include talks on the geology and human history of Groton, guided hikes, guided bike rides, a guided geological tour, and likely other activities. The next planning meeting will be on Friday 13 Feb at 16:00 in the Nashua River Watershed Association headquarters building.

**Plans for 2015:** Various projects for 2015 were discussed.

Paul proposed implementing the Marion Stoddart Trail connecting to the NEFF Groton Place parcel, and mentioned that some bog bridges may be needed on the new trails in the Cox and Walker properties.

Jason proposed that trails and places be given specific names to make them easier to discuss, identify on maps, and refer to on signs. This was discussed by the committee.

Olin reported that he plans to eventually measure all trails with a measuring wheel and take good GPS tracks in the process. The area from McClains Woods Road to Brooks Orchard has already been completed, but he expects the whole project to take several years.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 21:36 by unanimous vote, and there was much rejoicing.