



TOWN OF GROTON

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Groton Trails Committee

** Monthly Meeting Minutes **

August 18, 2015

Attendees:

Chairman	Paul Funch	X
Vice Chair	Olin Lathrop	
Members	David Burnham	X
	Wendy Good	X
	Stephen Legge	X recorder
	David Minott	X
	David Pitkin	
	Jason Remillard	X
	John Wiesner	

Visitors:

Chris Bussiere

Call to Order

At 7:33 p.m. Chairman Paul Funch called the meeting to order with the above Committee members present.

Chris Bussiere, a visitor, is interested in becoming a member of the Trails Committee and was introduced to all. Chris lives on Throne Hill Drive, is a member of the local mountain bike club and has in-laws who are prominent supporters of turtle protection efforts in town.

Minott moved and Good seconded that Bussiere be recommended for appointment to the committee. The motion was unanimously approved.

Funch lined up volunteers to take the minutes for the next five months. They are as follows:

September - Good
October - Burnham
November - Minott

December - Remillard
January 2016 - Legge

Approval of Minutes:

Minott moved and Good seconded that the minutes of June 16, 2015 be approved. Minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

Reports

Planned Hikes:

Minott reported the last guided hike was on June 4th. Three hikes have been planned, to be led by him. The first, on Sunday, October 18th, needs to be cancelled due to overlap with the Town

Forest Trail Races to be held that day.

On Sunday, November 1st, Minott plans a **Gamlin Indian Rock and Boulder Trails hike** at 1:00 PM.

On Sunday, December 6th, he plans a **Gamlin Esker Trail hike**, again at 1:00 PM.

Trail Maintenance:

Funch reported much mowing was done on a number of trails.

Funch also reported a **new trail** was built off of **Spencer Circle** in the last several weeks connecting to an existing trail along the abandoned railroad line which ends at the Senior Center. The purpose of the new trail (about 500 feet in length) is to bypass a private driveway which has been used in the past, and used inappropriately according to reports we have gotten.

Eagle Scout Projects: not much new to report at this time.

Blackman House Parcel Trail Development: Pitkin and Funch did some layout and flagging of the trail. The main issues with this project are avoidance of wet areas and being careful not to impact negatively the viewscape from the house. This parcel abuts the Hurd family parcel and some day may create an opportunity for a nice through trail. Due to various unrelated issues the Hurd family is unable at this time to give their blessing to a linking trail on their property. Therefore the Blackman trail will dead-end at the property line for now.

Nashua River Accessible Trail Project: Because of many timing considerations and environmental issues, the committee must complete a basic clearing of the trail by November 1st. There was discussion of several dates in October for us to get together and do an estimated 30-45 man-hours of work: Oct. 3rd, Oct. 10th and possibly Oct. 24th. The earlier dates are favored in order to hedge our bets against inclement weather during the month.

As information to the committee, Funch reported a **Town-wide ADA Self Evaluation** is underway, using a consultant: The town is in the process of evaluating, during the summer, many outdoor sites for their accessibility to disabled people. Included are buildings, trails, playing fields and places of special interest, such as Fitch's Bridge for example. Michelle Collette is coordinating the effort and has already received two letters from the consultant with preliminary evaluations of some sites.

Groton's Invasive Species Control Committee: the town wants a representative from the Trails Committee. Good moved that Lathrop be our candidate since he had expressed interest in this earlier. Burnham seconded, the committee unanimously approved the appointment, subject of course to Lathrop's acceptance.

Maintenance Needs: Funch commented we have about 110 miles of trails in town. He has been doing a large portion of the mowing this summer. More needs to be done and he personally needs help getting it done. We need more outreach to the public and more focus on our best trails.

There was discussion about the committee considering organizing itself to focus on certain tasks, town-wide, such as mowing, trail marker renewal, trail clean-up, chain sawing and managing outside groups.

Should we designate our “Top 10” Trails, market these to the public more aggressively and give them our highest maintenance priority? After that we could gradually add five to ten more trails to the list, but stay focused on the best trails from a maintenance perspective.

Visitor Bussiere said Groton has more trails than any town he has biked in (and that has been many towns in MA, NH and VT) with the single exception of the town of East Burke in the northeast corner of Vermont.

It was commented that we may want to name more of our trails for ease of discussion, marketing and communicating with the public.

Website Discussion: It was asked if we can incorporate a maintenance schedule and advertise our public hikes on the grotontrails.org site. There is a link on this site to the Trails Committee’s FaceBook page – this may be a better place to do that.

It was suggested the top five trails, points of interest in the town and photos and trail descriptions be placed on the FB page. Also a general descriptive write-up on the Groton trails system.

Remillard asked for pictures from all over town (on trails) to put on our site and possibly the interactive map. He stated that over 1,000 people visit our site every month. There was an interesting discussion on whether we should focus on specific trails, or on specific hikes, which could involve multiple trails. Members were invited to think over the next month about their favorite or most recommended hikes, or trails, to be discussed at the next meeting.

We should look at and consider websites in other towns to see how this issue of hikes vs. trails is handled by other promoters of trail systems.

Other Business

Good commented there are bills being considered in the state house and senate to allow hunting in the Commonwealth on Sundays. We should contact our legislators with our opinions on this.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting was seconded and approved unanimously at 9:30 p.m.