



TOWN OF GROTON

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Groton Trails Committee

**** Monthly Meeting Minutes ****

17 November 2015

Attendees:

Chairman	Paul Funch	X
Vice Chair	Olin Lathrop	X
Members	Paul Barstow	X
	David Burnham	X
	Chris Bussiere	
	Wendy Good	X
	Steve Henderson	X
	Stephen Legge	X
	David Minott	X (Recorder)
	David Pitkin	
	Jason Remillard	

Visitors:

None

Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Chairman Funch called the meeting to order with the above Committee members present.

Welcome New Member

Chairman Funch welcomed the Committee's newest member, Paul Barstow.

Approval of Minutes

Olin moved to accept the minutes of the 20 October 2015 meeting; Dave B. seconded; approved by unanimous vote.

Reports

a) **Guided Hikes:** Dave M. reported on completed and planned hikes:

- 1) Completed Hikes
 - 11/1 Gamlin Indian Rock and Boulder Trails – GTC 1:00PM, Dave M. – 26 hikers
- 2) Planned Future Hikes:
 - 11/27 Nashua River/Snake Hill Trails – AMC Legacy Hike, 10:00 AM, Olin
 - 11/27 The Throne Trail System – GCT/GTC 10:00AM, Dave M. and Dave P.
 - 12/06 Gamlin Esker Trail – GTC 1:00PM, Dave M.
- 3) Planned Future Trail Bike Ride:
 - 11/27 Gamlin Esker Trail/Cronin - Massapoag – GCT/GTC 9:15AM, Dave B.

b) Trail Maintenance/Development:

- 1) Paul F. reported completing chainsaw work near Williams Barn and in McLain's Woods.
- 2) Paul F. reported that volunteer trails-work hours total 363 hours to date, which includes 206 hours by Committee members.
- 3) Paul F. reported Kevin Kennedy's having approached him regarding potential trails-work projects for which Cub Scout Pack 12 could volunteer. The Committee discussed the general lack of age-suitable projects, but noted invasive plant pulling to be a good candidate, which could be undertaken in the spring. Paul will refer Mr. Kennedy to the invasive-species management committee in Groton.
- 4) Paul F. reported that Marion Stoddart is making the Committee aware that a milkweed planting effort will be undertaken in Groton Place on November 21-22 to help restore the local butterfly habitat, and that leaf blowing on the Nashua River Rail Trail will take place on December 5.

c) Eagle Scout Projects:

- 1) Alex Platt – Observation Deck in Hawtree: Paul F. reported that Alex received ConsComm approval and expects to commence work over the Thanksgiving period.
- 2) Will Premru – Paugus Trail Head: Paul F. reported DigSafe has marked the site; Will has obtained the trailhead posts; and their installation will complete the overall Paugus Trail project.
- 3) Ben Hauk – Two Bridges in McLain's Woods: Paul F. reported that Ben received ConsComm approval and that the bridges will likely be installed over the Thanksgiving period.

d) Sign Project Update

- 1) Olin reported having nine new signs in hand and showed these attractive and functional signs to the Committee. The signs cost \$17.40 each, which is much below market price. Olin said his plan is to install the signs as a winter project and discussed his planned method for fastening the signs to trees.
- 2) Olin reported Laurie Smigelski's having requested signs for Hazel Grove (Fairgrounds).
- 3) The issue of whether trail intersection markers are or aren't still in place in the Town Forest was discussed. Steve L will make an inspection and report findings to the Committee. Steve H. volunteered to assist Steve L. in this effort.

e) Surrenden Farm/DFW Update

Olin reported that the illegal bridge installed by parties unknown has gotten the attention of DFW staff at all levels. He believes that the decision to not allow certain trails to be maintained is very unlikely to be reversed any time soon, and that we should consider it final and cooperate with DFW going forward. Olin has agreed to map the existing trails in the area, and provide GPS tracks to DFW. This updated map will then be used as the basis for considering which trails will be marked as "closed", which he expects will be roughly the trails south of the ditch with the infamous bridge.

f) GTC's General Field Trail Plan

Paul F. reported participating in a site walk with GCT. He noted that the Smigelskis, who have a haying lease on the General Field, will continue their present practice of mowing the trails.

g) Mass Trails Conference

Paul F. reported that he and Olin attended the conference. Paul described field trips he made to trail systems in Lancaster and Clinton, and also on an informative presentation on boardwalks for traversing deeper water bodies. He noted that such a boardwalk might enable a trail link, for example, between Hawtree and nearby conservation areas. Olin reported on the conference presentation he made on trail signage; Paul said he got feedback that Olin's presentation was well-received.

h) Domain Name Change

Paul F. noted that the new registration for the domain is saving about \$100 per year. He also noted that the address for emailing the Trails Committee has changed to totrails@townofgroton.org.

Discussions/New Business

a) Nashua River Accessible Trail:

- Paul F. reported that all preparations for construction are complete and the contractor is expected to start work on November 23 and complete it within about a week and a half.
- Movement of benches and large boulders to the site requires heavy-duty moving equipment; however, DCR doesn't presently have suitably licensed operators. Paul is exploring whether local volunteers with the required equipment may be able to assist.
- Paul reported discussing signage with a senior DCR ranger, as well as an appropriate name for the trail. Given the historical significance of John Tinker's colonial-era activities at this site, the Committee consensus was that the trail would be most appropriately named "The John Tinker Trail."

b) Annual Report Input:

Committee members discussed the input information that Steve L. will need when he writes the Committee's entry to the Town's Annual Report. Paul F. described the annual trails project summary as it presently stands, which when complete at the end of the year, will be provided to Steve L. A summary of guided hikes and a summary of Boy Scout projects were also noted as annual report inputs to be developed.

c) Purchase of Cargo Trailer for Tools:

Paul F. reported that the van he has furnished the Committee for years for storing and hauling trail-maintenance tools has "died," and a suitable replacement is needed. Paul recommends purchasing a cargo trailer with a similar interior volume and a tail gate ramp. Such a trailer could be towed by most passenger cars. Wendy, based on her experience with horse trailers, recommended consideration of an aluminum trailer rather than steel. While aluminum is more expensive, an aluminum trailer will last many more years than a steel trailer without rusting out. Paul will further explore the availability and costs for both aluminum and steel trailers, new and used.

d) Website and Mapping Progress:

- Paul F. encouraged Committee members to continue checking out other towns' websites for good ideas regarding content and format.
- Olin reported having completed gps mapping of the trails south of Williams Barn to Brooks

Orchard.

e) Account Balance:

Paul F. reported a current balance of \$4, 642.92 in the Committee's Town gift account.

f) Reporter Assignments:

Paul F. solicited sign-ups for Committee members to serve as meeting Recorders in early 2016, with the following assignments made during the meeting:

- January – Steve L.
- February – Olin
- March- Paul B
- April – Dave P.
- May – Steve H.
- June – Wendy
- July - Chris

g) Miscellaneous:

During the course of the meeting, Chairman Funch circulated the following among those in attendance:

- A letter from the Committee to Jim Peregoy thanking him for his 18 hours this year of dedicated, volunteer effort on trails maintenance and development projects.
- Invoice for \$151.94 paid by Paul F. for stump grinding at the accessible trail site. Committee signatures required to approve reimbursing Paul.
- MassCor invoice for \$157.23 for nine new trail signs. Committee signatures required to approve payment from the Town's Trails Committee gift fund.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously at 9:35 p.m.