

Minutes of the March 2, 2020 meeting of the Bolton Trails Committee

Attendees:

Gordon Taylor (Chair), Larry Kunz (note taker), Betsy Taylor-Kennedy, Hemali Parekh, Bob Roemer, Chris Fitzgerald, Rebecca Longvall, Alexis Arapoff

Agenda items: (in the order discussed at the meeting)

1. **Rail Trail** -- Gordon and Larry reported on the first meeting of the MRTC's *ad hoc* committee on the Mass Central Rail Trail project. The committee of six met to review the DCR's unofficial draft of their proposal to complete the missing segments of the original Rail Trail from Boston to Northampton. The committee's role will be to explore the proposed pathways, see what the benefits and impacts would likely be on surrounding communities, and provide unofficial but persuasive guidance for the contractor that is preparing the proposal. Timing is close, so the committee will be walking segments, working issues, and providing updates to Trails Committee via email over the coming weeks. Gordon and Larry walked the proposed segment running west of the Nashua River outlet from the reservoir and then explored the railway tunnel on the east side of the river where there had once been a trestle crossing river and Boylston St. (Rte. 62/70) just north of the dam. [Photos here](#).
2. **Monthly Guided Trail Walks** – March walk will be 3/27 at 10 am on Bolton Flats -- Wellies or waders may be needed 😊.
3. **Trail work** – Work party planned for April 18 from 1-4pm. Need to clear understory on a proposed connector from Fyfeshire to a trail in Lancaster through Garfield Woods, to “40 Caves” and Franklin St.
4. **Equestrian-friendly trail request** – a frequent user of Vaughn Hills and Bowers Springs trails (Winslow’s daughter, Cindy) asked if we’d be willing to provide an equestrian-friendly connection between the two properties (Bowers and Vaughn Hills) that didn’t require a dangerous stretch along Bare Hill Road itself. She offered to help cover expenses if needed. We discussed options and decided we’d first need to assess whether or not the property on the Bowers side could even support a horse-friendly trail through what is largely wetland east of Bare Hill Rd. We’ll look at trail options along the NW edge of the property heading East and see if a horse-friendly crossing makes sense.
5. **Earth Day April 22** – Rebecca was hoping to do Trail Walks and/or cleanups but thinks attendance could be a problem (school vacation?). More to come on this via email.
6. **Weather-proof Trail Signs** – Bob Roemer has a contractor ready to go. We need to come up with quantities and timing to coordinate with budget availability.
7. **Volunteer Land Steward** – Rebecca is soliciting applications for the volunteer position. Details and job description are [available here](#)
8. **Maps** – Gordon has them all done except for Bolton Flats, Welch Pond, Wilder Pond, Overlook. Delaney maps from different sources show lots of variability in path location and access rights (mainly on Paragon/Future Electronic property). Owners have been posting “Keep off” notices and unidentified users have been pulling them down. Need approval before publishing current version of map.
9. **Property Updates**

- a. **Bowers** – the sustainability upgrades (trail surface reinforcement, parking lot upgrade, invasives management plan) are on hold for the Winter. Larry could not realistically make the Feb 1 deadline for this year's MassTrails grant application so will proceed in the Spring using donated materials and volunteer help.
 - b. **Vaughn Hills** – need to investigate discrepancies between trail locations and property boundaries. Gordon will re-track these and add a number of missing wall locations to add clarity to the map.
10. **Project List** – maintenance tasks (downed trees, wet areas, etc.) are being recorded on the map-based project list. We discussed the need for a process for systematic review and for turning this collection of tasks into actual work parties. A few members are already doing this on their favorite properties, but we need to review and prioritize the big picture.

That's it for what I captured in my notes. Please make any corrections or additions.