

Minutes of the May 4, 2020 Bolton Trails Steering Committee Meeting

Attendees:

Larry Kunz (chair), Hemali Parekh (note taker), Gordon Taylor, Betsy Taylor-Kennedy, Bob Roemer, Steve Rothman, Andrew Schaubhut, Bob Johnson, Jeff Bryan, Keith Silver

Disappearing arrows

- Someone had removed the trail marker arrows and 'No Hunting' post from Annie Moore. Greg has replaced all arrows. Someone from his family walks weekly to monitor the trail now. Both Trail markers and 'No Hunting' posts are back up now. Environmental police as well as local police have been notified. Environmental police will keep an eye on it as well.
- Rebecca will discuss yellow paint for trail markers with ConCom. Since we still have markers, we will continue to replace markers.

Ad-hoc trails at Rattlesnake Hill

- * Bob had reported that new straight trails have been created by someone where we have zig-zag bike trails. New trails are not approved by ConCom or BCT and are not on maps which can lead to confusion.
- * In past, a number of trails were created by Leaf blowers at Rattlesnake Hill. They were asked to stop making trails without approval process and they had stopped. Also a group of trail bikers wanted to put a jump off of a rock, conCom reviewed the proposal and site. There was liability issue so proposal was not accepted. They closed off the trail and respected the decision.
- * Rebecca explained that new trails should not be created and mapped if they were not approved. Current process is that If someone would like to propose a new trail, they would submit a written request of proposal to ConCom. This is then reviewed and site visit is conducted before approval.
- * Mass Land has showed how to block off a trail using pine sapling. Rebecca mentioned that combination of replanting as well as signage that 'revegetation in process signage' has worked for Stow. It was agreed to place signs showing correct trail and a temporary 'revegetation in process' sign that can be reused in future. Also to brush over, place an old log or two as guide and replanting to cover the trail. Rebecca will draft a sign. Rattlesnake Hill has been used heavily now with a different crowd.

Other Trail incidents

- * Bob reported that trail bikers with dog without leash has increased. He reported an incidence where a couple of times bikers responded saying there is no leash

law and were abusive saying that get out of my way. This makes it difficult to handle dogs with leash.

- * Vandalism was reported at Rattlesnake. Someone was using rock hammer at the query. This kind of incidence needs to be notified to police. Chief of police also suggested trail camera. In current circumstances it would be beneficial to invest in a trail camera. Rebecca might bring her camera if possible as we do not want anyone to continue this kind of work. They might be looking for boltonite but there is not much of the rock and it is not ok to do this kind of vandalism.
- * Incidence like this needs to be reported to police.

Trail Work on property during Social distancing

We need to follow guidelines. We cannot form a work party but one or two individuals that follow guidelines and keeps distance can go on trails and do trail work.

Map usage

Trail users during this time are either local who never used trails or people from neighborhood community come to visit Bolton trails. They are using maps on mobile to guide them.

Note from Paul Mitchel - Vaughn Hills

Water bars on hill coming down to beaver pond are not installed properly and don't work. He has volunteered to take on the project himself. Rebecca has responded with proper process to do this work.

Trail visits

- Vaughn Hill has been very wet at this time. Beaver dam has gotten bigger. A beaver and a barred owl following Jeff when he visited.
- 5 occupied nests of Great Blue Herons.
- A log across that can be removed and a hanger that seems hard to remove. Short board walk is broken and a bridge has broken boards that needs to be replaced.

Guidebooks

- * A draft was sent out and got feedback from few people which was helpful. Gordon has created third draft that he will send to review. Gordon is also working to standardized all maps for guidebook.

- * Rebecca is helping on getting contour lines sorted out. Current contour lines does not include area outside Bolton. We are planning to show contours for trails that connect to trails outside Bolton.
- * The base tile layer OSM Piano that was originally used in no longer reliable, so we need to select a new one. Gordon tried a layer which has some disadvantages as it does not label it properly. Also, we cannot show facility, etc. if they don't really exist as it would be misleading. Gordon needs privilege to change the labels, so he can update labels and use the base tile layer that works best.

New Trails

- Gordon is planning to include Lancaster Road from Fyfehire in maps. Rebecca has shape file and OSM polygon mappings from them. They will probably open those trails once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. It will be release them once all updates are done.
- Connection from Welch Pond to Sawyer Road is not done yet as the trail needs to be approved by ConCom. Rebecca will discuss Eric Schartner about this.
- Tadmor OSM 1 and 2 have been approved. OS3 is on Forbush mill and is behind commercial property. They are working with town to re-work the trail line.

How to find Trail easement?

Larry wanted to know how someone can find the trail easement(question from a new resident). Rebecca responded that deed shows trail easement and conservation restriction. Deed is found It is Worcester Registry of deeds records. Rebecca has been working with Town Planner to supply that. GIS maps don't have accurate overlay.

Maps sharing on third-party apps

Gordon brought up that 2 years ago, a fellow who was writing an article on MassTrails about hiking trail in Bolton had asked if he can add a link to our website. We had promised to get back to him but, we never got back to him. Should we respond? Rebecca suggested to ensure if he is not making money out of work put in by Trails committee. In this case, he is just cross referencing maps which is ok to do.

Events and Delays

- Spring restart for surface refinishing work has been delayed due to social distancing. Isolated trail work and pre-work which can be done while keeping distance might be possible. Keith would be able to do pre-work if Town is ok with

this. Rebecca would have to clear with Town before she can confirm that same transportation(tractor) as before can be available.

- Lancaster Road connection has been delayed.
- Earth Day - It was a cold day but, members picked up trash, Rebecca did virtual reading, and gave out seedlings as they always do.
 - Team agreed that organizing alternative day for volunteer work during summer when restrictions are lifted would be nice to do.
 - There will be change in future planning of such events as social distancing seems to be here to stay.

Google sign in inventory

- * Google sheet is shared by Andrew. you can update information file, add pictures, you can later open up a .kml file which would connect with GPS location. we will update this sheet with any Information about new work needed.
- * We discussed to revisit property stewards for each property and update property details.

Property review

- Bower Springs - a) Trails to bare Hill Road, there is a big tree leaning over path near culvert bridge but it would not fall anytime soon. b) For the trail that needed attention, there is a sign saying do not re-use the trail as we are revegetating it. Rebecca will discuss with ConCom in June to discuss revegetation as It needs a bit of engineering. It will have signs for revegetation until any work can be done. c) Edging at Bower has disappeared so, Larry will put in new edging.
- Powder House - a) Old Town House Road has two trees that are blocking it. Trees are not close to either end which means we need to carry chain saw unto there. b) There is a tree leaning at the top of hill toward Quail road. People have been walking around it but needs to be taken care of. It's a complex work and is challenging.
- Zink-Northwoods - There are no signs at cross roads. Last time when this was discussed, Drew looked up if we are authorized to put signs up. We may have to look into that and ask for permission from land owner. Rebecca will ask. Is there a blanket policy about maintenance?
- Rattlesnake Hill - a) After emergency, Bob will need 3-4 people to help with fixing bridge. b) Tree that grows by historic Grist mill has not been removed. This is good 2 ft in diameter and should be removed or it will damage the Grist Mill.

- Danforth and Keyes Farm - Danforth will be wet and would need pruning. Keyes Farm has not been turned over yet. They will most likely make a connection with Danforth but are not required to based on decision.
- Randall-vinger - There was a tree to be cleared but looks like someone has cleared it. Table and property had the name 'Vinger-Venable and Rocky Dundee' but map name is changed to previous version of name 'Randall-Vinger'. We should keep the same name everywhere.
- Welch Pond - We would like to clean up vegetation away from historical structures. Gordon and Betsy discovered there is more to the town land than what seemed like town land. There are some downed trees that should be cleared.
- Wilder - New trail is now handed over.
- Fyfeshire and Haynes-Wheeler Conservation Areas - New wood sign has been made by Gordon. This sign is easy to see from 50 ft. We need to use drop cloth, It is partially rusty and needs to be painted. This is maintenance work as sign is crumbling. Gordon and Betsy has done some clearing at this property. Nothing is done from Fyfeshire to Wattaquaddock Hill road yet.

Other discussion

Betsy mentioned that Nancy Caisse has given information about to Bay state riders and a woman's name for learning about equestrian trails including bridges and helping set up volunteers organized for trails, etc. They run awards, etc. to motivate groups.