

Minutes of the August 2, 2021 Bolton Trails Steering Committee Meeting

Attendees:

Larry Kunz (chair), Rebecca Longvall, Bob Roemer, Gordon Taylor, Betsy Taylor-Kennedy, Steve Rothman, Andrew Schaubhut, Bob Johnson, Cynthia Ayotte, Winslow, Bob Hatch, Mara Levin, Mary Ciummo

Chairperson - Larry

Note taker - Hemali

Horse compatibility latest proposals

Cynthia has reached out to Harvard. Liz Allard, the conservation person for Harvard, is not in charge. Open Space Committee member, Margaret Wisen, known as Wendy, is the right person but she had no idea about the property being part of Harvard. After discussing project with her, she has said that she will need time and will get back to us. Since that project needs approval from Harvard and Bolton, there will be a slight delay. Cynthia will reach out to Harvard and have a joint connection to get them interested and cooperate.

Culvert at Vaughn Hill - Reconnaissance is done for Vaughn Hills bridges. Some of the crossings are not safe for anyone and not just horses. Mara abuts Vaughn Hill but none of the crossings are accessible by her. One of the bridges is titled and is dangerous and other bridge is washed out leaving exposed culvert there. Cynthia shared some of the findings and measurements for bridges with us. An 8' bridge would be needed at culvert and the area after the bridge needs Triax to protect wet area. The 10' bridge that is tilted should be fixed. They have measured all bridges and have information at this point.

Loop around beaver pond is another area and if part of loop is not accessible then it would be higher prioritized higher. Woodside is the only way to get in Vaughn Hill by horses which is not very safe due to cars and narrow roads. Cynthia has discussed road safety and has been waiting for response from DPW.

Larry asked to prioritize this work based on function, cost benefits and effort to help plan and start executing.

Implementation: Bob is working with a company in Pennsylvania that is interested to provide fiberglass reinforcement polymer solutions that are expensive but longer lifespan. He is working with a few trail orgs like Bay State trail riders, Mass Trails, etc., to improve trails. This would be discussed at next meeting. (Company name is Bedford Fiberglass Reinforcement polymers.)

Mary Ciummo who is with public way safety committee mentioned that Randy Heglin has been keeping them updated on sign requests for horse crossing. She asked to reach out to them for signage.

Cindy will have financial plan for all the bridges so any one of them can be started. Plan for this work needs to be presented to ConCom for approval. This is going in the right direction. Everyone likes a loop trail but water level was very high a couple of

years ago so we would need to get approval from private land owners to get a trail easement in their property.

Bob Roemer mentioned that we have 47 miles of trails and only 6 active volunteers. As we discuss sophisticated projects like bridge building, it is important to also bring resources. Work prioritization is also important. A way to promote that would be to have a project board and have projects that people would like to help. Horse riders is a new group that would help us maintain trails.

National Honor society requires number of volunteer hours so they might be able to help. Eagle Scouts projects, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts can also help if projects are advertised ahead of time.

Mary Ciummo - Public Way Safety Committee

Valerie has mentioned MAPC's landline vision which aligns with complete Streets and cyclist safety. Landline Vision has maps but are not very detailed. There are two routes in Bolton. Map shows a pathway along Forbush Green and another one along Wattaquaddock Hill. Last week Gordon went to speak in front of MAPC committee that is leading this effort Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC). It was not clear to Mary if there would be one or two entry ways from Bolton to connect to this trail. Bolton is part of the rail trail map and in MAPC area but not in MRPC(?).

Rebecca mentioned that Valerie has pulled Drew into meetings with MAPC. He is keeping an eye on a test ride that might occur. Mary would like to know more about trails and what is the connection.

Drew mentioned that goal is to connect with all town centers between towns like Lancaster, Bolton and Harvard. Main route is from Harvard Road to Bolton down S. Bolton Road to Hudson.

It is relatively preliminary. Test Drive has been delayed due to weather. Rebecca has been discussing with Valerie about making hiking trails as pathways to connect from point A to point B as part of this effort. Rebecca would like to know if in the end would we be linked with these trails or do we need to create new trails. Drew said that they have used Strava heat maps to select these trails based on the paths that are already being used to connect.

This would encourage people to use alternative transportation to get to points of interests like coffee shop, pizza place or ice cream shop. Thoreau trail is another area that was discussed. It's good to see that the town is aware of it. They are looking at good trails that exists and they want proper signage.

Winslow Green mentioned that trail bike usage at trails like Rattlesnake has gone up significantly. Bridges would also help bikers.

Volunteers list

Rich Dischler has updated volunteer email list. Gordon asked Rich to also get the Trails Steering list. Rich sent two lists. One of them is Trails Steering Group moderators which no one has heard about. Gordon proposes that we should do similar exercise to confirm with everyone on the list to check if they want to still on this group. There are

some people that are no longer active. May be some of them should be added to volunteer list instead of the second list.

Trail head signs - Bob, Rebecca, Gordon

Trail head maps are ready to be installed. We need to spend time and put a team together who can help. Larry and Gordon will discuss and get that project going. Current status list is updated by Gordon.

<https://boltontrails.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Trail-Head-Maps-15-July-2021-status.xlsx>

Map updates

Taggart map is coming along. Rebecca has to update and finalize it. Formatting needs some tweaks and signage need to be finalized. Gordon has also spend time on uMap and organized it to match style with other maps. Gordon emailed updated version as part of agenda.

Proposed Taggart trail extension is not going to happen. Proposed trail connection is also not final but is being discussed with Lancaster as well as Don Vespa.

Updated trail for Taggart property will be called Still River Trail. Once ready, it would be added to online map and in next guidebook.

Big Projects - everybody

- Oaks and Schultz Farm - Trail work that was started can be as there's nothing blocking us to finish. For the time being, it could go to Sawyer Rd. walkers could then walk up Sawyer Rd to join Haynes-Wheeler - we should keep Justin Schultz in the loop. Rebecca has received response from state department that oversees CR. They have no issue with moving the trail. But first Bolton Conservation Trust will need to approve it, second Justin Schultz, the new owners of The Internationals owner and ConCom will need to agree with this.
- Wilder - The bridge is complete now. Next, the old trail needs to be cleared through the meadow. Bob suggested that we need a single list to track all of these projects which can be check off otherwise, it would be forgotten. Rebecca said that mowing and maintaining should be part of contracted work.
- Bowers - Larry has set up two major work parties to tackle invasive clearing. He has emailed to volunteer list. Wattles invasive species, clean up. There is bittersweet, poison ivy and multiflora roses that needs to be cleared. Larry is following a plan where if you consistently clear up areas for three years then invasive don't return. Gordon is asking if this can go on events section on the website.

Arrowing

Gordon has placed arrows in anti-clockwise direction at Keyes Farm. He also removed some of them as they were not placed in a way that people can see, Chainsaw team is needed as there are a few trees are down there, Developers have not done anything to remove the junk as Rebecca is aware. Rebecca will coordinate with a crew to help out.

Table at backyard Bolton - 21 Aug, 28 Aug, 11 Sept.

Currently only the Aug 28 date has been staffed (by Drew and Gordon+ Betsy)
Larry can help if he knows what is required to set up. Drew can help with set up but can't staff.
Folding table, popup tent, guidebooks, stickers posters, trail mix and encourage them to sign up as a volunteer and sell guidebooks. Gordon this having a tablet would be helpful to get people to sign up.

We can do similar to master plan and have people put a marker to identify where they live and find a trail near their homes. Bob would also be there as part of master plan committee.

If no one can help for third date, we won't have a table for that date.

Area Review

Bob has taken care of a few small trees and have not put them on map.

Gould-White - It is possible that these trees are cleared. Scott Duhaime lives there and maintains that area without notifying anyone.

Vinger-Venable - Bob Hatch and his daughter Emily might do this as they have offered it today. Drew brought up that the trail kind of disappears at some point as it is not being maintained lately. It also is steep so you have to return if trail is not maintained.

Danforth has couple of trees near the entrance. A resident was proposing to speak to a property owner about getting access to get a trail across but, Rebecca has not heard from them. She will reach out to them.

Rattlesnake - There was an old connection to Burnham Road which does not seem to be maintained. Is there any interest in maintained this. Betsy thinks that when Nancy Skinner donated property, the intent was to have an easement. Dan Gaffney might know more information about that donation. Rebecca and Betsy would reach out to Dan about this. That area is significantly wet.

Another area is Mentzer property. Bob painted sign last year but area is overgrown this year.

Do Emily and Cynthia want to join the Steering Committee?

Yes, both of them would love to join and volunteer with trail clearing as well.

Gordon reminded that chainsaw training has not happened for a few years. That needs to be done again to train new people.