

Minutes of the May 10, 2021 Bolton Trails Steering Committee Meeting

Attendees:

Larry Kunz (chair), Hemali Parekh (note taker), Rebecca Longvall, Bob Roemer, Gordon Taylor, Betsy Taylor-Kennedy, Steve Rothman, Andrew Schaubhut, Bob Johnson, Keith Silver, Winslow Green, Cynthia Ayotte

Chairperson - Larry

Note taker - Hemali

Trail Bridges safety – presented by Cynthia Ayotte

Cynthia presented a presentation about how trail bridges can be improved so that are safe for both hikers and horses. She and other horse riders find it difficult to pass bridges that are not designed for horse riders in mind. Some of the bridges are in poor state and can be improved. She showed images of bridges at Vaughn Hill, Annie Moore and Rattlesnake. Bay State Trail Riders did a presentation in past about what kind of bridge is considered suitable and safe for horses. It was mostly about surface of the bridges.

Vaughn Hill - There is no good way to go to Vaughn Hill. Bartsch Connector towards Bowers and from Bowers to Bare Hill is important to get updated. Horse committee has a volunteer who can help. Part of the bridge is in Harvard so Rebecca would need to talk to Harvard about that.

It was brought up that there is another bridge at Moen which also requires connecting with Harvard. Rebecca can connect with Harvard officials once we can have financial and material finalized.

Cynthia mentioned that it would be great to work with them as ally for a pilot bridge.

Second bridge at Vaughn Hill is not crossable but not many people use it.

Wilder - It is a dead end right now since we can't pass Forbush Mill. Once Tadmor parcel is in good state, it would be great to update. (EagleScouts project) Cadence Farm - a horse farm in Harvard

Second bridge at Vaughn Hill is also a good one to pilot. There is a beaver pond right after Norse Road. Tires from bike shows that people are not going through planks. If a horse-safe bridge is allowed here than it would also be used by bikers. Existing bridge can be moved to a place where it would be useful.

Vaughn Hill Bridge is steep but for technical reason it is not proposed for phase 1. Other bridge at Vaughn Hill that can be fixed is away from entrance but a horse can be used to bring supplies to fix that bridge.

RattleSnake - You have to go from Sugar Road if you want to go to East end so Cynthia proposed that a horse friendly bridge would be helpful.

Annie Moore/Bolton Woods Way - Horse owners can't access this trails since both bridges requires fixes. A 5' wide 4x6 and misdeal as per state site is needed.

Proposal

Replace some bridges and make them safe for horses to pass. Horse group would like to work together to improve bridge safety. Some of the bridges need replacing and safety is an issue. There should be a similar format for all bridges. Everything will require maintenance. Debris pulled out of culvert. Culverts are ok for horses but bridges having a curb would be helpful. Bob suggested it would help during maintenance if curbs are removable.

Bay State Trail Riders have examples of bridges. Forest service used slightly different material to pea stone. Pea stone needs to be replaced and carrying is hard.

Horses can step up. A ramp can be slippery but a step up would be ok if it is wide enough.'

Cynthia will make a proposal with mapping out the bridge to be worked on and material needed, if there is help needed from an engineer. Gordon will show Cynthia how to use the map.

Volunteer sign up system - Hemali

Volunteer sign up is in good state. We have 21 volunteers. Next steps - Send one more email suggesting that we are going to use this list for future emails. Please sign up if you haven't yet or you will not receive this mailing. Create a group email from this list. Hemali is also working on Event Registration form. Once that is in good state, we can use it to register volunteers for events.

Trail Head signs - Bob, Rebecca, Gordon

A number of intersection signs are ready with Rebecca and Bob. A couple of signs required approval which is all set now. And all material is ready for intersection signs. They need to be printed. 2 are need for trailhead and 20+ for intersections. Garrison House has a post with no signs. It was taken by someone. Rebecca will print and get it ready to be replaced.

Self-guided tours - Gordon and Rebecca plus anybody else.

Gordon completed Fyfeshire. He has added 3 routes. All QR codes and routes are tested. Gordon can help with QR codes if anyone has another one. Rebecca thinks that there is increased traffic at Fyfeshire which might be related to self-guided tours. A large tree (Wolf tree) is everyone's favorite. This most likely is a White Oak. Rebecca also knows another large trail by Horse Ring Trail.

Bolton oddities - Drew

Drew sent an email with a survey on Bolton oddities. He has created a list based on votes. Drew compiled all responses, ranked in few different ways, and Wolf tree is the

top choice. Others are The Beaver Pond, Split Rock at RattleSnake, Cave, kettle Hole and the Zink Boulder.

Rebecca suggested to send a second email to get better ranking for last few. Overall, Drew has done a great job in compiling this list and getting it ranked.

Wilder Bridge

Bob, Larry, Gordon went to measure. Three 16' long 4 x6 are needed to do this work. ConCom has approved this work. This bridge is not equestrian friendly. It needs a curb and it needs to be 5 feet wide. Bridge is 16' and its span is 10-12 feet so stringers are needed to handle load. Adding rocks and Re-bar and midspan support would be needed to make it horse friendly. Cynthia said that Horses can take a step up. But, if a step was used than bikes and in some cases, people also may not be able to use it. It would be worth consulting a civil engineer. Cynthia suggested that Winslow's neighbor who is a civil engineer might be able to help.

The Oaks - Drew, Larry, Rebecca and Hemali

Loop along Ballville Road needs to be arrowed and finished. Larry, Drew and his son helped out with part of this trail. A question was asked if we could meet at top of hill to complete the loop. Rebecca thinks it is possible. Betsy/Gordon said that they can allow a passage through to complete the loop.

Horse trail that was used by Nancy Case is mostly o town's property but some runs on Nancy's land. Either we can ask Nancy or re-route the trail and than speak with her in future.

New owners of Internationals and connection to Fyfeshire

Right now they want to open the property and get maintenance cycle in place so town is not their priority, but Rebecca will bring this up in future. Trail may go at the perimeter of the property as the club is private and open to members only.

Schultz family is trying to work out with International Follow trail that parallels North Brook, series of meadows. Within 50 ft is wetland and there is a tree farm that is being used by Schultz family so we would like the trail to be moved upland.

Wilder Boy Scouts project - Greg

Tabled as Greg was not at the meeting.

Horse Ring Trail - Rebecca and Larry went out and added markers from Railroad bed to behind school. There is not much to do now for this property. Question was raised if we should include map for this area. There is no map on website or in the guidebook. Part of this area is being used by seniors. This is ok to put it up on website. We should wait until 580 Main street is sorted out before updating trail guides. Gordon will go with GPS to get GPS track of the route.

Taggart Property

We have closed on it. We need to post either a laminated project sign or one with framed sign into the property. We should create a map for that. Trail would use existing cart path and it leads

down to Forbush through town property. Rebecca has tracked twice so, it seems like the track will be on town land. There is a paid summer Internship this year. Intern will assist and lead effort to connect trail from Forbush to Taggart. It would also have information about Stream and wildlife as this grant comes from “Wild and scenic River”. Grant requires that there is a sign on the property. A sign with their logo should be used. Rebecca has a sign that can be used.

Fyfeshire kiosk

It looks like a clutter. There is signage all over the place. An Eagle Scout project to get this improved would be great.

Maps

Should we be adding areas to the online maps? We seem to be working in new (for us) places. We should wait before adding them to guidebook but Gordon can add internal use only maps that can be turned off or on.

Trust Annual meeting invite

They have invited us to present. Bob recommended that someone from trails committee should present at the meeting. Popularity of trails, conservation lands, Taggart land, tremendous success at Tom Delaney Nature camp. So it makes sense that we highlight the success of ConCom, Trails committee and the Town during pandemic. A tour around trails of Town Common and have a meeting with presentation in-person observing social distancing and masks. Trails committee would lead trail walk and a presentation about trail work and maintenance during pandemic. Create a presentation and work with Dan to combine our presentation with theirs. One of the organizations either Trustees, SVT or Mass Audubon did a chart about uptick in usage during pandemic. We could use that in presentation. We can include pictures of Bowers Springs with a lot of cars and someone can lead trail walk. Rebecca would help draft presentation. Story can include how website, trail guide and maps, All Trails Club, etc.

Gordon would start the outline and others can help review and offer edits. Rebecca will offer notes she has about the Town common trails. Drew would help if he can make it. Meeting is on June 6.