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## Minutes of the May 8, 2023 Bolton Trails Steering Committee Meeting

### *Attendees:*

*Rebecca Longvall, Bob Roemer, Gordon Taylor, Betsy Taylor-Kennedy, Andrew Schaubhut, Steve Rothman  
Chairperson - Larry  
Note taker - Hemali*

### **Spring Backyard Bolton**

- Rebecca has printed updated version of the map that Drew will pick up. Gordon will get copies of guidebooks from his home as well as from Bolton Bean to sell at the event.
- QR code needs to work and go to Conservation Trust website.
- Two membership to Wildflower Garden in Framingham will be raffled.
- Drew will use same table and tent. He asked for dog bowl. QR code to purchase guide book will be available.

### **Mass Trails Bridges State Grant Update - Rebecca**

- Budget is approved at Town meeting. Material purchasing can be organized now. Material can be purchased after July 1. Work will start in July.
- Rebecca is flagging start and end of approaches and limit of work in field. Anyone that would like to help with this should go with Rebecca to see an example first then we can do it on our own. Hours and time spent needs to be documented. Rebecca will send email with schedule for next two weeks.

### **Fyfeshire Bridge Repair - Rebecca**

- Bob will talk with William the scout and Rebecca will send a reminder email. William is doing this as a service project but if he wants to do this as Eagle Scout project, he should let Rebecca know about it so she can set that aside for him.
- If William is not interested then we can schedule a work party for this project.

### **Trail Marking Improvement - Rebecca**

- This work is approved and ready to go. Drew is leading discussion with a university that might be able to create trail markers. He is investigating pricing and material but has not heard from them yet.

## Guidebook Sixth Printing - Gordon

- Guidebook is at the printing press for sixth print. Press is very busy so we won't get it by weekend.
- Price might go up based on feedback from press. He also need to reset printing since every page is changed and there are two new pages.

## Walks and events

- April walk was a no show.
- Summit challenge is to reach summit and not exactly following a specific route to reach the summit.
- Next walk will be at Rattlesnake on May 25 at 10 a.m. Rebecca asked if anyone would like to lead/co-lead. Bob will get involved as long as he has time on that date.
- Bob brought up to talk with Eli to see if the group from Echo Adventures to plan and lead some trail walks.
- This is last scheduled walks from ConCom until September. Rebecca will be away on leave after that so she would like to discuss if someone else would like to plan/lead trail walks during that time.

## Trust meeting

- Nothing to report.

## Volunteer project list.

- Boy Scouts: Vaughn submerged bog bridge removal, Sullivan Memorial repair, Peach Hill bridge repair, The Oaks trash removal...
- Eagle Scout Project at Taggart Entrance (Bridge)
  - They worked over the weekend and project is mostly done. Only couple of things left to do.

## Major projects. List limited to top 3 priorities

- Bowers
  - Larry did a walk-through to take notes on status of invasive plants and poison ivy plants. The meadow where organic treatment was done, there is very little in that area. Other areas also still looks lot less than years before. Larry will keep monitoring that. The area under the trees have a few sprouts coming up. Larry plans to do recurring spring time, late spring and fall mowing or extended salt spraying as preventative application in that area.
  - Larry is working on updating map. He will have a plan together by next meeting. He is just running late on that project.

- We do not want to cut any branches on Norway Spruces. Two people are needed to lift those branches and cut saplings underneath it. That another sub-project at Bowers.
- Jim takes care of piles of cut up material to make sure it composts there and does not start growing.
- New shed is approved by ConCom.
- Pine branches from storm - Create a pile of pine branches that does not include invasive plants. They can be chipped and used when we treat work around earthen dams.
- Eagle Scout project near TDNC area
- Wilder
  - Rebecca will talk to trustees to get a response.
  - Old trail is under water now but it's dry now. Larry asked if trail that went to shared driveway and can be used. Rebecca said that part of that property is private so we cannot go through that area. Trail does not exist around the pond as it has been under water. Newer bridge where crossing was put in is actually through wet meadow. You can submit a request to continue a trail but its a seasonal trail and it would be difficult to keep people out so it is not advisable. Stay on marked trail.
- Common driveway
  - This does not need anything new. Brushing is needed in this area while protecting mature trees.
  - Rebecca will check if she can potentially putting a trail head sign by Wilder
- Ballville Trails/The Oaks
  - The Oaks Loop Trail - Drew, Gordon, Larry
    - Drew cleared some of the marked loop trail. As the leaves are coming up, it would good to mark it and potentially open it. Gordon and Larry might go and add some arrow there.
    - One section needs approval from Rebecca. Rebecca can come and check that area.
    - A sign on Ballville Road can be a temporary sign for now and present at Backyard Bolton as work in progress trail.
    - Drew will set up time to review the area that can erode in future.
  - Connect Ballville Trails/The Oaks to Fyfeshire - Drew, Gordon
    - Drew is working with the Trust to finalize the plan that is shared here.
    - The link below is second version and is on Bolton Trails website.
    - <https://boltontrails.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/North-Brook-crossings-proposals-4.pdf>
    - Option 2 identified by the Trust. Drew and Gordon are going to write a proposal
- Volunteer newsletter - Hemali
  - We sent to volunteer was sent to everyone. Rebecca did not get it since she was out.
  - We sent to 43,26 people opened it. We had 61.9% open rate, 21% clicked through the links. Most opened link was the new trail - Taggart Connection.
  - We discussed to send the next one in July.

- Bob asked if we can send this to trust email list. Trust has not sent any newsletter for a while. It would be nice to send one to the Trust mailing list. Hemali would go to Trust meeting to discuss this.

### **Wildflower Walk - Hemali**

- Hemali did first walk to gather information about the wild flowers that grow in the area. We do have most of the wildflowers that are on the map. Apple tree is the only one that is missing.
- Hemali will take notes throughout the year so we can update maps by next year.
- Since flowers/plants grow and flower at different times and seasons. We need to take notes and pictures and observe the area for the spring, summer and fall season.
- We will most likely set up a guided walk next year that highlights plants.

### **Other Businesses**

- Vaughn Hills Trail Improvements: Woodside Drive trail (segment M-N-P) and reroute near steep section (segment I-J)
  - ConCom has approved re-route. We can now add switchback instead of existing straight up route.
  - Woodside Drive portion was already approved. There will be a work party coming up for that, too.
- Bolton Summits / Hills of Bolton
  - Two new people completed the Summit Series. Drew and Dan co-ordinates the responses and giving hats to them.
  - Emails come to "[info@boltontrails.org](mailto:info@boltontrails.org)" which is our newsletter. They get automatically forwarded to Eli, Rebecca and Liz. They need to be forward to Drew and Dan.
- Chainsaw training
  - Larry has a number of volunteers that would like to do chainsaw work. We should say not to do chainsaw work without training.
  - Larry has two people that need training.
  - Larry says we should describe what training involves. Rebecca suggested not to put something on website. Until the Trust has a training set up, we should not tell what the requirements are since that misleads people. They may think that they can do all of those things so they can use chainsaw.
  - We should quote information that links back to document, for example, "Not to remove vegetation" if we want to put anything on the website.
  - Town of Stow does not allow chainsaw. You need to go to DPW.
  - It is very rare for an organized group of volunteers to be allowed to use chainsaw. We had a training and we have a few volunteers.
  - Bob says to keep a small group that we offer the training and updating the training regularly. Guideline should mention not to use electric chainsaw due to injuries that can occur.
  - We probably don't need more than six people that are qualified in volunteer group.

- Training manual was excellent. It was reviewed by a chief arborist and said this was better than any other that he had come across.
- Send a lot of people to Bob and Rebecca. He can discuss with Steve Snider to get him interested in training a small group.
- Gordon is frustrated about people that are doing this without consulting with us. Rebecca says if you observe and feel comfortable, please say something. You can call the police but you can also send an email to Rebecca so she can address if needed.
- Next meeting - Gordon asked if we should go back to in-person meetings. Most of us are comfortable to have this meeting from home so we will continue to meet online.
- Note from Rebecca: She will keep a running list of projects approved by ConCom so they can be worked on.

### **Damage at Rattlesnake**

- Area in front of the cave is depressed. A huge area has been disturbed. Someone has ripped off rock to look for something. They seem to have broken a lot of rock. Bob suggest to put a camera there.
- Rebecca says if he can send an image of first time and recent, she will keep an eye on it and also report to one of the officers about that.
- Muddy patch is pretty serious. Mud does not go away. Now, people are going around the bog. Mostly trail bikes are going around and making the path wider. Bypass is bigger than main path. Bog bridge would be a good idea.
- Bog bridge — it would fairly long. Three 12 foot 2 by 12 and probably six as you would want double the width with intermediate supports. Rebecca asked if this is something we can put duck board across. Bob says that yes, that can be.
- In past, Area around lime kiln was found since people burnt a lot rock to remove rock from that area.
- Material would need to be reviewed by COnCom as this is a resource area. Material in the container will need to be checked but Rebecca thinks we may have it.
- Start with informal discussion with ConCom. It will need to go through public hearing. We will submit filing with material, design and area where we are proposing this.

### **Deferred business**

- Century Mills Update
- Horse Ring/Derby Field area Trails
- Bench locations; suggestions
- Guidebook-2024/2025 potential target updates:
  - Ballville/International Trails
  - Derby Field/Horse Ring
    - Drew mentioned that Select Board has approved this but we need to do an RBA which takes about a month. They will do a site visit to help expedite the process.
  - Extended Powder House
  - Welch Pond Trail to Sawyer Road.

- Vinger-Venable route correction.
- Century Mill

### **Area Reviews**

- <https://www.trailcare.com/map>
- Lee Lang mentioned to Larry about a big tree, about 2 feet diameter, above Helm property. Larry went to see but could not find it. He will have to look for it again.
- Another Ash tree came down by Lime Kiln. Bob will cut it down.
- Sullivan Memorial - Rebecca said that this one is completed and cleared.
- Bowers - A tree down near Tom Denney area - Its probably still there.
- Ballville-A new tree has fallen. This is not urgent but we should take care.