
Minutes of the December 04, 2023 Bolton Trails Steering Committee Meeting

Attendees:

Bob Roemer, Gordon Taylor, Betsy Taylor-Kennedy, Andrew Schaubhut, Steve Rothman, Keith Silver

Chairperson - Larry

Note taker - Hemali

Meeting maps: <https://www.boltontrails.org/Latest-Meeting-Map>

Fyfeshire Bridge Repair - Bob

- No updates.

Walks and events - Drew

- Drew led the walk on Black Friday. There was relatively smaller turn out.
- Next walk is planned for January 1. Location is TBD at this time. Drew suggested to lead hike to Horse Field Trail. Everyone liked the plan as there is parking available and most people don't know about this trail.
- Gould-While was offered as another option.

Vaughn Bridge installation - Keith, Larry, Drew, Gordon

- All the wood has been moved out to site.
- All parts including screws have been purchased and are with Keith.
- Treads were cut into 6 foot lengths but carrying them out to side was really hard work. Gordon, Larry and Keith started work. They have also decided to place sacrificial wood as support under the stringers. That would keep stringers aligned as area is very muddy so they will settle at different lengths.
- The base wood will provide surface area of 4 x 6 feet that will sit over mud and allow to set up stringers on level ground. Surface of the bridge is at ground level. Larry saw that water level was higher than even when they worked on it.
- They had to dig a trench to put sacrificial footing, strings and tread about 12 inch deep so the bridge sits at ground level. One end and they came across roots of dead pine tree that was coming in way so they had to dig it up to be able to set up the area. Bottom of trench is same level as the bridge even after them trying to set it properly. The trail goes downward so if you sink it deeper, the trail will get bigger. They are suggesting that there might be some ramp to get to the bridge. It will be very gentle ramp.
- They will need to do something if bridge needs to be coated with gravel. They still don't know how they will get pea stone there.
- Larry has sent some pictures to the group.

- They are using the rough sketch given by Rebecca. She wanted the top of the bridge to be at ground level. When you are on trail, you don't have to step up or step down. We are making bridge one more feet longer due to the length of the stream. Gordon fell into the stream while doing the work.
- Larry says that they will make rough sketch of area and add observations on site.

Derby Field, Horse Ring and Sawyer School to Berlin Rd Connector - Drew

- Gordon, Drew, Liz and Dan went for a walk to check how much of railroad bed belongs to private land. It definitely is on private land. Alternative is to make trail through swamp which requires significant infrastructure to build a trail . Dan will follow up with the owners, Slade family. We will have more details at the Trust meeting.
- Arrow markings and signs are needed at the section parallel to 495. Otherwise, the rest of the trail is done.

Vinger-Venable Route clearance - Gordon

- No updates.

Brush Hog purchase and storage - Larry

- Conservation budget does not have money this year to purchase brush hog. They can add this to FY 2025 budget. This means money won't be available till July.
- DPW has money but brush hog purchase is not part of the budget.
- Third option was the Trust. Larry and Gordon will need to go to Trust meeting and bring this up.
- Drew asked why Larry and Gordon started to look into buying brush hog if there was no budget. Larry explained that this ask came from DPW originally. A person named Leslie discussed with Larry and said that they did not know what to buy and needed help. During that discussion, it seemed that DPW had the budget but needed help to narrow down the choice.
- Drew mentioned to wait till Rebecca gets back since she might have more insight. Other option is to rent it until we can buy a brush hog. You might want to be ready with answers to questions like these and we need to know who can rent it. Storage of brush hog is another open question that need to be answered. Larry mentioned that about three times per location that they need to use it.

Trust meeting - Drew

- Vespa family owns a lot of land in Bolton near Taggart and is about 69 acres. Town wants to hire a lawyer. Family and Town would like to conserve the land. Family is asking Town to pay money for title, survey, etc. Eight acres are moved for existing house lots out of which some are chapter 61 with forest land on it. There is a huge meadow where Taggart land is. One of the meadows is flooded. Town will need to hold the CR.
- Trail along the side of the winery
 - Trust wants to discuss with the Pelletier and other abutters including Rileys.
 - Some of the area is kept clear due to orchards but other parts will require brush hog to clear especially area along the stone wall. That land is owned by the Trust.
- Oak Loop Trail adjacent to North Brook
- Warner Road Property
 - Drew is getting required information from the Town. It was filed by engineering company. Drew does not have contact information. Town may disclose information since it is on town land. It would be good to have personal connection instead of knocking on door.

Major projects. List limited to top 3 priorities

- Bowers
 - Jan Johnson and Larry has done two more invasive clearing sessions. Larry joined one of them. 90% of the area is done and about 100 feet are left to complete. They will monitor the area to see how much comes back next year.
- Ballville Trails/The Oaks
 - Gordon has created map on the website. He has attached .GPX and .Kml files. Trail is mostly cleared. There is one tree down that requires chainsaw.
 - There is no update on parking.
 - Drew did a presentation for Ballville Trail at ConCom. It was well received, but this was first presentation so no out come.
- The Oaks Loop Trail - Drew, Gordon
- Connect Ballville Trails/The Oaks to Fyfeshire - Drew

Wildflower Walk – Hemali

- Gordon sent tree ID guide which will be helpful. Progress is being made based on feedback from this group.

Vaughn Hills Trail Improvements

- Woodside Drive trail (segment M-N-P) and reroute near steep section (segment I-J). Drew, Keith, Larry
 - Drew, Larry and Keith have been putting the re-route of steep section. A single switch back that goes up one side of trail He will try the new trail using bike. If that works then he will brush in old trail and add arrows. He will also get GPX track for map updates.
 - They will put a sign with wording “Trail is closed to reduce further erosion.”

Approved projects, not started

- Welch Pond Trail to Sawyer Road.
 - Gordon has marked the trail. Drew tried it and said that it is fairly steep and hard for most hikers to utilize that trail.
 - If we make it less steep, that will keep off the private trail. They think people are probably still going through that trail even though they have placed a sign from the trail’s direction but not from the road side.
 - Gordon found a hunter’s stand on conservation land which is illegal. It was close to Sawyer Road. It did not seem more than 500 feet from the houses. Gordon has reported it to Lauren.
- Bridge repair at Rattlesnake (also noted on trailcare.com)
 - Drew brought it up to ConCom. They are ok with repairing it due to safety issue. They will wait for Fyfeshire bridge to be done and check inventory before ordering supplies. This work can be done in spring.

Bolton Summits - Drew

- This challenge is almost close to be completed. 13 hats are left. They had ordered 48 hats in total.

Area Review

- <https://www.trailcare.com/map>
- Most of them are known.
- RattleSnake and Annie Moore has bridge repair.
- Rattlesnake has a big tree near the quarry. Bob and Drew might attempt if they have time over the weekend.

Items deferred because of Rebecca’s absence

- Trail color coding

- Eagle Scout project near TDNC area
- Mass Trails Bridges State Grant Update - Rebecca
- Wilder; Anything new on the trail route
- Common driveway
- Trustees land
- Volunteer projects.
 - Boy Scouts: Vaughn submerged bog bridge removal, repair, Peach Hill bridge repair (needs ConCom approval), Ballville trash removal, Wilder Map Sign, Rattlesnake Bog bridge...

General Deferred business

- Century Mills Update
- Guidebook. 2024/2025 - potential target updates
 - Ballville/International Trails
 - Derby Field/Horse Ring
 - Extended Powder House, include true summit and “Church to pipeline cutoff?”
 - Welch Pond Trail to Sawyer Road.
 - Vinger-Venable route correction.
 - Century Mill
 - Tom Denney hike route

Any other Business

- Drew brought up an area that he came across on his bike ride near Berlin Road. He likes to go from Randall-Vinger, up Berlin Road. He came across two areas. Betsy mentioned that they are both APR land that the Trust monitors and state owned as agricultural land. They are not open to public to walk on the property. Winery leases one property for crops. Protected APR lands don't have public access.
- Guidebook - Drew brought up that Mass mapper has a new layer for liver on it which will allow us to add stone wall layer.

