
Minutes of the February 05, 2024 Bolton Trails Steering Committee Meeting

Attendees:

Bob Roemer, Gordon Taylor, Betsy Taylor-Kennedy, Andrew Schaubhut, Steve Rothman, Keith Silver, Larry Klien, Abbie Maguire, Greg Matte

Chairperson - Larry

Note taker - Hemali

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

Emails stopped working

- Info@boltontrails.org had to be suspended for a few days as it stopped working. Now it is hosted by a different server. Gordon suspects that this happened due to an email address in the mailing list which is not deliverable. Gordon disabled anything that looked like contact form while trying to resolve this issue.
- Gordon mentioned that major carriers like Google, Yahoo and Comcast all tightened the rules around emails but did not announce it. Now if we own a website, we need to be careful to set up DNS parameters.
- Details about the issue were not discussed.

Map updates; Base, reroute at Vaughn - Gordon

- Vaughn Hill map is rerouted on master map. Change is very small.

Fyfeshire Bridge Repair - Bob

- No updates.

Walks and events - Drew

- Abbie has proposed to lead the hike one weekend before Earth Day for the week of April 20/21 with theme of Earth Day.
- She mentioned that she can lead on one of the new trails.

Vaughn Bridge installation - Keith, Larry, Drew, Gordon

- Rebecca was going to discuss with Bob Nash but there was no update about it.
- Larry mentioned that it would be important to get the process started with new material which would last longer.
- First bog bridge summary - Keith mentioned that original plan was that the bridge will be assembled off-site and dropped in place but, they only got pressure-treated wood and that they had to do work for many hours for that bridge.

- Larry will set up a meeting with Rebecca and discuss project management plans for bridge project.

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

- Drew said that we don't want to release maps until we have permissions to access private land as part of the trails or we move the trail on public land.
- It is possible to move the trail on public land but existing trail is well-defined and is used for so long that it would be better to keep that trail and ask for permissions.
- Drew will discuss with Rebecca.

Vinger-Venable Route clearance - Gordon

- No updates.

Brush Hog purchase and storage - Larry

- Notes from Rebecca
 - Purchase and storage of equipment is a Conservation Department/Commission issue/task.
 - Please note the brush hog funding has been included in the budget for FY25 considered at this coming Annual Town Meeting.
 - The research on equipment is greatly appreciated! Thank you for your time in providing insights and pricing for various machines!
 - The purchase itself is up to the commission along with storage which will not be on conservation land.
 - Once the materials are moved out of the container specific to various projects that have been already permitted and yet to be completed, it is likely any equipment purchased for Town Conservation Land will be stored there. That would be the intention at least.
- Larry mentioned that they would like to rent the brush hog for a day or two in spring. That way when they need to buy new one, they would know which one is good to purchase.
- Bob discussed the brush hog with Randy Heglin. Randy said that they have found the problem and repaired the brush hog works now after a few updates. Bob has offered that if it still does not work then he will take a look and help to fix it.
- Drew mentioned to document the research for brush hog.

- Bob asked what was not working when it was still functional. There is an area where poison Ivy grows, there is a point where you have to stop and remove things that get caught vines like bitter sweet and poison ivy. Bob says that a sickle bar will help with that.

Trust meeting - Drew

- Annual Trust meeting - Trust is looking into different venues. Trust is planning to have a talk from Kathy Romeo about “Children in nature”. This was the plan pre-covid.
- It will be 50th anniversary for the Trust.
- There was a meeting for Warner Road property. Owners are interested to preserve a trail from Warner Road to Zink-Northwoods. They will build house lots for 17 acres and would like to protect the rest.

Major projects. List limited to top 3 priorities

• Bowers

- Invasive program - They have been trying to do three cuttings for three years to manage invasive plants. Since brush hog does not work, Larry brought his own mower once.
- Buckthorn removal — about 90% of area has been cleared. There is last 5-10% at the end of the trail between two ponds that remains.
- Jan Johnson wants to create a video of Buckthorn removal. Larry has asked her to discuss this with Rebecca before Larry can help with this.
- There are still places with invasive plants like multi-flora rose, Bittersweet, etc., that needs to be monitored and removed.
- Rebecca has informed about a major state funded project that will take place to restore and improve dam area.
- Drew asked if they would resurface of walking path. Larry says that yes, that is part of that project to reenforce that area. Larry mentioned a meeting is needed for this project.

• Ballville Trails/The Oaks

- Gordon has sent maps to Rebecca for lamination. She is looking into obtaining plexiglass and adding signs like “You are here”.
- Bob has enough plexiglass and backing for 4 signs. That can be used for landscape or portrait. Gordon will contact Bob.

- Rebecca and Drew will meet to discuss about “Notice of Intent” as Drew needs help before sending this to property owners.
- Drew asked if there is any work required for property owned by Gordon. No work is required but they would need permissions to do any work.
- There might be some more signs needed.

Wildflower Walk – Hemali

- Hemali to discuss QR codes with Gordon.

Vaughn Hills Trail Improvements

- Woodside Drive trail (segment M-N-P) and reroute near steep section (segment I-J). Drew, Keith, Larry.
- Brushing in of the trail and closing the old segment is still to do.

Approved projects, not started

- Welch Pond Trail to Sawyer Road.
 - It needs another site visit to map out where to propose a non-multi-switch back trail. Owners at the top of the hill where there is private CR with two other private land owners.
 - Drew and Gordon will do another site visit.
- Rattlesnake Bridge is waiting for Fyfeshire Bridge.

Bolton Summits - Drew

- 2023 Summit challenge has ended but there are 6 hats left. If someone completes that challenge and sends an email, we will support it until the hats are left.

Newsletter

- Test Newsletter was sent to everyone and shared during meeting.
- It has links to articles written by Drew and Gordon. It also mentions that Summit Series that ended.
- We discussed that the TrailCare link should not be sent if it sends email using info@boltontrails.org

Items deferred because of Rebecca’s absence

- Trail color coding - Note from Rebecca is that signs will be coming from Voss Signs and likely to be purchased end of FY24 or FY25 (currently prioritizing other items).

- Eagle Scout project near TDNC area
 - Rebecca says that this individual has not provided any update nor project start dates. Therefore to my knowledge this wont occur this year. Will follow up.
- Mass Trails Bridges State Grant Update
 - Note from Rebecca - General Note about crossings for MassTrails Project - I am working on getting materials to location prior to volunteer work days as that was the largest hurdle relayed with the first crossing after discussions with our great group of volunteers who worked on the first crossing at VH. Again, if you would like to lead a volunteer work day or assist in leading please identify which crossing and potential dates from May - August you would like to host a work party.
 - Additional discussion captured under bridge improvement topic.
 - New trail at Wilder
 - Common driveway
 - Trustees land
 - Notes from Rebecca - Awaiting response from property owner, Trustees are comfortable as long as the property owner is.
 - Gordon said that Rebecca has gotten permission from Trustees to build across their land. Rebecca is referring about the Davis family. Larry says that he has connection with Davis family so he will talk with them.
 - As per Drew there used to be a trail as per Drew. Gordon and Larry will get area outlined so Larry can discuss this with Davis family. They also discussed that they can walk with GPX track to get exact trail location.

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 - Drew will ask Rebecca if any help is needed.
- 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

Area Review

- <https://www.trailcare.com/map>
- Houghton Farm - newly reported one
- Bowers
 - Two reports are in Harvard.
 - A culvert where stream comes from meadow. Culvert has big granite blocks that defined inlet and outlet. Culvert is clogged so a pond is built and water is going to field. Gordon and Larry tried to clear it out but could not clear completely.
 - Larry will do a site visit with Rebecca. Larry showed pictures. Needs more exploring to understand how to unblock this.
- Long Hill - broken bridge. It is most likely in Harvard.
- Vaughn Hills - Greg will take care of newly reported one.
- Wilder - Drew has mentioned the one that was reported. It requires more than one person.
- Oaks - Larry and Gordon took care of the reported issue.
- There are a couple at Rattlesnake. Drew will take care of them.
- Gordon and Larry cleared the ones that were reported at Powder House.

Any other Business

General Notes from CA - Rebecca

- Prioritizing maintaining our existing trails and properties at this time (through town owned conservation lands).
- Bower Springs Conservation Area will have work carried out in maintaining earthen dams on property. This is outside of volunteer scope but when the time comes, assistance with outreach and communicating schedule will be appreciated. Work involves removing mature woody vegetation along earthen dams (NOTE THIS IS NOT THE ENTIRE CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE PONDS), and phase II will be naturalizing and revegetating with an herbaceous mix within removal areas and adding material/grading top of earthen dams (this is also including the area locally known as the beach).