

Hanover Conservation Commission Trails Committee Minutes, April 19, 2012

Present: Tom Linell, Doug McIlroy, Peter Shumway

Short items

Several members were away for school vacation.

Tanzi reroute. Following up on John Taylor's suggestion from last month, McIlroy found that going around the wet swale instead of cutting short of it is feasible and visits a nice stand of wildflowers. A route has been laid out to be cleared by Youth in Action.

Harris Trail. McIlroy checked the trail north from Iby Road. There is some bad rutting in the Plummer Road section, but the woods road is clear from there on to the intersection with a woods road from Thompson Road. The Harris Trail from there to Goose Pond Road remains to be checked.

Quabbin to Cardigan Partnership. The Partnership unites nearly 30 organizations, with the Forest Society playing a pivotal role. Hanover is on the western fringe of the Q2C corridor. Linell, McIlroy and Taylor attended a meeting in Canaan, which sought public input on possible routes and linkages in the northern part of this corridor. Similar meetings further south will consider possibilities in those regions.

To the south of us Q2C trails would incorporate all or part of the existing Ragged-Kearsarge-Sunapee loop. A suggestion to utilize part of the Northern Line rail trail competed with the notion that a route should stick to ridges where possible—a viewpoint that seemed to have more support. A side connector to the AT somewhere around Smarts Mountain was advocated. That, the AT, and a further connection south from Mascoma Lake would offer another major loop north of the RKS loop.

Some skepticism was expressed at the Q2C meeting about human resources to build and maintain such a route, and about whether anyone would want to hike the route. The latter concern was countered by support for connectivity.

Signage. The committee's comments on signage were discussed in the Commission. No new considerations arose, but on the matter of indicating trail difficulty, it was thought that a locally created rating scheme would not be useful. Conventions ought to come from a body with broader scope, at least on the scale of the UVTA. QR codes were deemed to be premature. Branding with logos is appropriate at major entrances. The kind of signposts that we use may depend on DPW's capability to install them.

General trail conditions. Linell and Shumway said that considerable brush clearing is needed on the Ridge Trail. Alv Elvestad told McIlroy that where the treadway is clear, especially on grades, brush is often too close for skiing.

Trails day options

Invasive plants. The biodiversity committee is considering an invasive-plant inventory on the AT. Invasive-plant removal has been suggested for Highway 38.

Assorted small jobs. These include improving several wet spots at Mink Brook, Tanzi Tract, Cory Road, etc.; resetting some retaining timbers on the River Trail; placing stepping stones on the Ridge Trail near Pasture Road.

Hayes parcel. The alternate path from the Etna Library to the King Sanctuary, which runs past a large erratic boulder and through an old orchard, needs pruning and brushing.

Blazing is needed in various degrees on Pasture Road, Ridge Trail, and Aggie Kurtz Trail.

National Conservation Civilian Corps.

Town manager Griffin has asked whether Hanover could use an outdoor-service team from this organization to work on trails or the like. It seems a couple of weeks' work could certainly be organized; it is not yet known whether these teams expect to operate in one location for the whole summer. Vicki Smith suggested updating of signage as a big, coherent, candidate task. She is finding out about their terms of engagement.