

Hanover Conservation Commission Trails Committee
Agenda, April 9, 2013, 8:30AM, Black Center

Short items

- Appoint minutes-taker
- HHS Earth Week project on River Trail (Taylor)
 - Buying materials
- Dana Pasture litigation status
- UFLT gathering and ADA info (Trummel)
- General trail conditions

Ridge Trail workday May 14

- Size of job, people and duration
- Time and place
- Organizing volunteers

Trails Day, June 1

- Update work list
- Do we want to do any of these?
- Something else, e.g. organized hike?
 - Dana Pasture is timely (lady's slippers)
- Organizing
 - Existing groups, e.g. UVMBA, Hypertherm
 - Ad hoc

Other business

Next meeting

- Do we need another meeting before Trails Day?
- If so, when? (Short meeting 5/14 before Ridge Trail?)
- Otherwise June 11

Attachments

- Work list (coming soon)
- March minutes

Hanover Conservation Commission Trails Committee Minutes, March 12, 2013

Present: Tom Linell, Doug McIlroy, Bill Mlacak, Ted Osgood, Peter Shumway, John Taylor, John Trummel

Short items

UVTA contract. The budget prepared for town meeting 2013 holds the Conservation Commission at the same level as in 2009 when we first contracted with UVTA for Taylor's services at \$2000/year. Meanwhile, increased UVTA consulting rates have caused us to curtail the contract from 100 hours to 80. Taylor said that this year has not been a squeeze, thanks to amplifying his work by recruiting more volunteers and to fewer serious storm events than in past years. However, his attention is limited to trails near downtown; more remote trails may well need his services [e.g. Ridge Trail; see below]. McIlroy asked what allocation we should seek in the next budget to restore services to the original level. Discussion led to an answer: \$2400.

Balch Hill signage. The Commission and the Conservancy approved the removal of all signs from the Grasse Road trailhead, leaving only the kiosk. The town's blue sign will come down in return for more prominent kiosk display of the roles of town and college. They also agreed to replacing the cluttered signpost at the Hemlock Road trailhead with a Rhino post.

General trail conditions. Taylor said South Esker is icy but otherwise good.

Trescott Company. On a Conservancy-sponsored tour of the water reservation, Mlacak was particularly impressed by the forest on Pineo Hill. Also interesting was the area of the former poor farm, school and ice house. There are good internal access roads. He urges the company to allow some further public use beyond the current limited hunting. Jeff Smith has taken over John O'Brien's forestry practice there.

Trails map.

A draft print of the new edition was available for last-minute corrections. Trummel asked about showing other trails on Moose Mountain such as the "General's Trail" on the Moose Mountain Lodge's ski map, and recently signposted by DOC. McIlroy said permission to show them hadn't been either granted or denied. Shumway said the General's Trail crosses properties belonging to him, Dartmouth, and the AT. McIlroy will try to find the other owners' attitudes towards it.

Linell had reported that the NPS had bought the "Storrs lot" inholding on Moose Mountain, but McIlroy found that the tax roll still shows it still in private hands. Inquiry to the Forest Service and the county register of deeds revealed that there had been a transfer, but of only part of the parcel. It has been corrected on the trails map and brought to the assessor's attention.

Lidar data. Mlacak said that Dartmouth has lidar data for the town, which shows both elevations and structures. It may be available from Kevin Nelson in the planning office.

Trail improvement

Expected in 2013

Rhino signposts. Locations were given in February minutes. How to indicate trail name has not been finalized—a likely outcome is horizontal signs, routed or plastic, bolted to the top of the post, but this has yet to be tried. Post-hole diggers are available at UVTA and McIlroy has one, too.

Goodwin bike loop will be finished by UVMBA. Construction of a parking lot depends on the outcome of a recreational trails grant application. Taylor said that a side loop around the central knoll has been flagged for consideration. It may have already been indicated on the Morton map. McIlroy wondered about increasing the footprint of human activity, and cited some studies about animals staying away from bike trails in Colorado. Mlacak said that generally people and wildlife are out and about at different times; McIlroy wondered if the denser woods here would mitigate the Colorado effect. No decision will be made without inspection.

Ridge Trail. Plans for a May 14 work day will be finalized next month. Linell said a pole saw may be needed. That can be borrowed from UVTA. Alv Elvestad, who will participate, says the brushed-out way needs to be widened in places for the benefit of skiers; Linell pointed out that widening can let in more sun to grow even more brush. We will have to make judgments on the ground, not decree a uniform width.

HHS River Trail workday. In preparation for this April 26 event, Taylor will show McIlroy what materials are needed for more steps to stop erosion and for retaining timbers on the side-hill section.

Other candidate activities

Rinker Bike Loop. Remove flags, remove "coming soon" sign at north boundary, install Rhino post at fork.

Trails between Moose Mountain Road and AT need to be checked and probably cleared.

Blazing.

Complete blazing on newest Ridge Trail section.

Check blazing on Pasture Road east slope.

Some blazing may help on obscure parts of Ridge Trail. (Is intermittent blazing OK?)

Dana pasture subdivision could require rerouting, were it to occur.

Golf course to Chieftain. A public trail along this portion of the river is a long term goal worth plugging away at. Mlacak said there is some erosion on golf course near CRREL. Is this a part of the potential route, which might be proactively restored? Osgood said there is an "Old Goat Path" from Kendal to Chieftain, which may be in play since Kendal bought the motel. A golf-course-to-Kendal connection was in the Rivercrest plans that are now on hold. McIlroy expressed disappointment at Kendal's residents-only policy for the continuation into Kendal. Osgood was encouraged to look for support for relaxing the policy.

Lists of possible activities. Other long term dreams have been floated from time to time, only to drift out of sight. McIlroy suggested that a list of trail needs and wishes be

maintained and included in monthly agendas. Mlacak suggested that a Google document could be updated by and available to all. McIlroy will try to include a first cut with the next agenda for subsequent refinement as to form and content.

Other business

UVTA. Taylor said that in connection with periodic relicensing of Wilder dam, the UVTA is advocating for public use of the dam as a trail. The UVTA is also raising money for a high-line rock mover for the Alliance's tool crib.

Dana Preserve litigation. Subdivision of the Dana Preserve, which is the access hub for the south ridge of Moose Mountain, could profoundly affect the extensive network of trails on the property. Julia Griffin asked the Conservation Commission for recommendations about subdividing. Trails are obviously a big consideration in those recommendations. McIlroy said the pond loop and connectivity both north-south and east-west should be preserved. Taylor said the vista above Moose Mountain Lodge is the best in Hanover and should be preserved. Linell said the Robeses were good skiers; this may suggest sympathy for continuing the trail network. Taylor said that for the best trail experience, development should be out of sight of trails. Mlacak will prepare a letter to convey these concerns to the Select Board via the Commission (attached).

Subject: Draft letter Date: Wed, 13 Mar 2013 15:20:45 -0400 From: Bill
Mlacak <bill@whitmail.net> To: Doug McIlroy <doug@cs.dartmouth.edu> CC:
edwin_chamberlain@valley.net

March 13, 2013

To the Hanover Board of Selectmen:

The Hanover Trails Committee would like to offer the following comments regarding the Dana property issue.

We are disappointed that the town is ceding its conservation easement interest as 50% owner of the property. This sends the wrong message to those who might be interested in making similar donations to the town. It also fails to honor the intent of the bequest.

If however, the property does end up divided, we would strongly encourage the Town to acquire the other part of the property. This area is a valuable public resource, with trails, trail connections, wildlife, and wonderful views. These trails have been in public use for a long time, and continue to remain popular.

We would encourage the Town to protect the current trails, with their viewsheds, when dividing the property. Public access to the Ridge Trail and to the pond should be maintained. Trails should be buffered from the house envelope. We would strongly urge the Town to require a conservation easement on as much of the property as possible, including the undeveloped portions outside any house envelope. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Hanover Trails Committee