

Hanover Conservation Commission Trails Committee Minutes, April 8, 2014

Present: Ron Bailey, Ed Chamberlain, Tom Linell, Doug McIlroy, Bill Mlacak, Peter Shumway, John Taylor

Visitors: Perry Seale (Hypertherm), Wayne Chen (Hypertherm), Jeanie McIntyre (Upper Valley Land Trust)

Hypertherm connectivity

Seale recounted Hypertherm's outdoor facilities and usage. The company owns a large block of land, much of it wetland and rugged upland that they do not anticipate developing. They maintain an internal trail network. Many employees engage in outdoor activity, such as biking to work, walking on their own and nearby trails, and (notably) participating in public service on company time. Chen said that, in the latter capacity, they have frequently taken on maintenance tasks on trails nearby and elsewhere. Much of this work has been organized through John Taylor.

The company now owns an as yet unopened trail easement along Mink Brook. Hypertherm borders on other open space recently or soon to be owned by the Upper Valley Land Trust and the town of Hanover. They are interested in making connections to these areas for the use of employees and the public.

McIntyre described two parcels the Land Trust now owns on Great Hollow Road leading up to Rix Ledges, and said the Land Trust is negotiating for a narrow strip that lies between them. Later this year the Land Trust will acquire from Altaria a much larger parcel abutting Rix Ledges, Hypertherm and Centerra.

Taylor cited existing trails in the Land Trust lands as candidates for early connection. McIntyre said that will depend on habitat considerations and conditions of the state's approval of mitigation aspects incident to acquiring the land. McIlroy asked whether an ambitious multipurpose trail layout previously proposed for the Altaria parcel was likely to be implemented. McIntyre said that is unlikely, and trail designation will not proceed before the completion of a comprehensive habitat assessment. The land possesses unique features, such as a bear wallow, which human intrusion could disturb. Taylor said that, in his experience, it had proved fairly easy to minimize impacts once vulnerabilities had been identified.

It was agreed that trail development in this large and rich area should follow from a long range vision of the utilization of the area, taking into account multiple and sometimes conflicting goals of conservation and access. A small working group will be convened by the Land Trust to address the matter. It would promulgate principles, not a trails blueprint. Perry suggested the group collect existing information (several sources were cited by various participants), and offered an example of an appropriate level of findings: endorsement of the concept of a significant local trail loop. The time horizon for ultimate realization is more likely to be measured in years than months, especially in view of the

Land Trust's commitments in perpetuity. Mlacak was appointed as the committee's representative. McIlroy and McIntyre will discuss its makeup further.

Short items

Signs. McIlroy learned that brown, being a nonstandard color for the heavy multilayer plastic signs that the committee had discussed, requires a minimum order of 10,000 pounds of plastic. Mlacak observed that means we should probably retreat to metal, and the committee concurred.

Moose mountain. McIlroy said that Dartmouth has bought the Lacoss parcel astride the Harris Trail between Wolfeboro Road and the Harris Cabin. Chamberlain said Peter Robes had represented to Julia Griffin that his brothers want to explore selling their half interest in the Dana Preserve to the town. Some actions, such as gathering pertinent town documents, for the associated court case have been put on hold.

Kendal. Mlacak said that on June 4 Kendal will hold a neighborhood information and discussion session about their plans for the former Chieftan property.

Other business

Linell announced a meeting in Warner about linking Kearsarge and Pillsbury State Park—a potential part of the Quabbin-to-Cardigan project.

Next meeting

Because of the length of the preceding discussion, other agenda items were postponed. Mlacak observed that the May meeting would be rather late for discussing spring work items, so a special meeting will be arranged for April 22. The next regular meeting will be May 13.