

Hanover Conservation Commission Trails Committee

Minutes, June 10, 2014

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

Short items

Rinker Tract. Mlacak and McIlroy installed steps at the Route 10 trailhead. They found the roadside poison ivy spreading into the trail. McIlroy returned and cleared it from the trail, but the mother patch remains.

Trails challenge. This get-out-and hike initiative of the Hanover Conservancy and the Board of Recreation will run from June to October. It encourages visits to most trails within a mile or two of downtown, with outstanding family participation to be recognized at the annual Storrs Pond Fallfest.

In preparation for the program, McIlroy and Mlacak will extend blazing at South Esker to make the Spencer Road trailhead more apparent. Gail McPeek and John Joline will correct some ambiguous blazing on the through trail, which bypasses that trailhead.

Nathan's Garden. Chamberlain mentioned the proposed gift of this park to the town. Mlacak asked that the town's conservation easement to the Hanover Conservancy would not permanently foreclose foot travel between Maple and Wheelock Streets through the garden. McIlroy said a map from the 1930s shows a trail through the ravine in which the garden lies.

Fullington Farm. Taylor said that the mowed path along the west side of the field continues through the Friends of Hanover Crew property at Wilson's Landing--a much more convenient route than the trail easement through the hedgerow. McIlroy has spoken about it to Nancy Carter of FOHC, who responded that the path makes practical sense, causes no trouble and is welcome.

Pine Point. Taylor said the trailside, which had been overenthusiastically cleared by town personnel, is growing back. Some logs partly block the trail and will be cut back. A single-track bike path down from the cemetery has appeared.

UVMBA. Taylor said the Mountain Bike Association has been working actively on trails in the Goodwin Forest and Boston Lot.

Pine Park.

The Pine Park Association plans to raise funds for a bridge at the Girl Brook Trail stream crossing, which is deteriorating from wear and erosion, and is impassable at high flow. The wooden bridge will be eight feet wide to accommodate cross-country races that use the trail.

Hanover DPW will armor eroding stream banks nearby. McIlroy was concerned about the esthetic impact of rip-rap in a natural area, and recalled Mickey Marcus's plan for erosion control and flow calming by emplacing logs. DPW has said that this would be more expensive and entail more construction impact, due to equipment operating in and around the brook, not just on the trail. Bailey said that similar armor placed near the high bridge 25 years ago is still functioning yet barely perceptible, as it has been quite thoroughly colonized by vegetation.

Chamberlain, who has recently been appointed to the Association's board said that it is stepping up oversight after a long period of relative somnolence. They seek more engagement by the college and golf course, which operate on Park land. More generally upstream activity has major impact on lower Girl Brook. One increasing source of rapid runoff is the Ray School.

Jobs List

Mlacak updated the jobs spreadsheet as the discussion progressed. Some highlights:

Mink Brook Trail. Lower entrance is obscure. Linell did some other clearing; said the upper half could use some work – the trail and a brook are vying for real estate. Signage is lacking, particularly at forks. Relocation of the lower half to avoid brook crossings should be studied. McIlroy, Shumway and Mlacak will do some clearing June 21.

Ridge Trail. Chamberlain made a map of properties to help channel landowner relations. Gaps, where continuity is not permanently assured include the southernmost parcel on the west side of the ridge, a stretch just south of the Baum land, the Pytte and Shumway properties. At some places the exact location of property lines on the ridge may affect matters. It was pointed out that the trail, though about 50 years old, is probably not recognized as an AT tributary. This should be checked with Matt Stevens of the ATC.