

Hanover Conservation Commission Trails Committee

Minutes – March 8, 2016 – Approved 4/5/16

Present: Ron Bailey, Hugh Mellert, Ed Chamberlain, Tom Linell, Doug McIlroy, John Taylor, Bill Mlačak, Hawk Metheny

The meeting opened at 4:05 pm at the Howe Library.

1. February 9 Minutes

The following should be added to section 3:

Tom proposed straightening the Appalachian Trail on the east side of Trescott Road to the side of Adams cellar hole. This change seemed reasonable and worth exploring. Rory felt that it should not be pursued so that the AT has a diversity of terrain experience.

Approved with the above addition to section 3.

2. Highway 38 Trail

Introductions were made to Hawk Metheny from Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). They are working with Dartmouth and the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) to acquire the Hudson Farm property. This would provide a buffer on the Appalachian Trail (AT). The parcel in question contains the Highway 38 trail, which has a deeded easement. The trail and connector 38A were built by Ron Bailey about 20 years ago. TPL is doing abutter outreach, and there will be more done after negotiations are complete. The house that is visible from Trescott is on a separate lot and it not part of this property. Hawk displayed a draft description and map, and will provide an updated one with corrections.

The purchase will likely occur sometime in 2016. The existing trail easement runs with the land. It prohibits bikes and horses. It requires a sign indicating that bikes are prohibited. A change to allow bikes seems unlikely given the amount of work involved and the short timeline. Bikes aren't allowed on the AT, and the ATC wants to discourage bikes from trails that feed directly to the AT. There is currently not much bike use there. Once it becomes part of the AT, the same AT rules would apply: no development, no logging, no logging roads, with a focus pedestrian scenic opportunities.

The property would be acquired by the National Park Service, and then transferred to the White Mountain National Forest for management, like the other Appalachian Trail parts. The ATC would be the steward, with Dartmouth Outing Club doing ongoing day-to-day maintenance. This is the current status of the AT in Hanover. There will be a new survey, and then this is done again every 5 to 7 years.

There was some discussion about mowing. The open area of the parcel is about 1/5 of the total. Hanover Conservancy would like to see the field stay open so as to preserve the view. It is assumed that the field is currently mowed by Dartmouth. The town does not do any mowing. ATC may mow 1 to 2 times a year, and is trying to set up an endowment to cover this. It may be a good idea to mow the treadway in the field more often to help control ticks.

Another trail concern is that the trail entrance at Trescott Road is muddy, and needs some clearing. Current trail maintenance is done by King Arthur volunteers on a regular basis, reporting to UVTA. For future improvements, ATC can provide materials and help with volunteers. The trail is part of town responsibility. It took a lot of maintenance in the past.

There is a process to change parking on connector trails. A request can be submitted by local group, and there is an environmental review. It might be a good time to look at reroutes, in particular from the AT parking lot on Trescott Road to the beaver pond on Trescott map connector between Payne road and Wolfeboro Road.

It was agreed that a site visit in April with ATC would be appropriate. Suggested dates: April 6, 19, 20 and 21.

3. Trescott Lands Report

Bill reported that the Trescott Committee idea had been approved by the Conservation Commission. John said that he will be doing assessments over the next few weeks. Most of his time has been on Trescott Lands. For the Committee itself, John has talked to Peter Kulbacki, and will ask John Sherman, and is checking with Rory regarding Dartmouth. The target size is 6 to 8 members. The meetings would be open meetings for other stakeholders. The draft recreation management plan is being reviewed and getting comments. The proposed entrance sign was shown to the committee.

There is some concern about Knapp Road near the Parker Reservoir. Stones on the ice show that people have been going on the dam. Maybe there should be a platform to provide a view with some kind of fence around.

There was some discussion about changing the parking lot on Trescott Road, Perhaps the AT parking lot could be used instead, with a reroute of the AT over Trescott Lands, and the Trescott trails going to the east and north of the reservoir, outside of the buffer area. One concern is that bikes are currently allowed in the Trescott Lands but not on the AT. There is a process to change parking on connector trails.

To follow up from the previous month's meeting, Bill showed the photos of the grates in the logging roads at Trescott. As requested, John had set up orange flagging and fiberglass poles to mark the area. There is a second similar grate issue further up the road.

4. UVTA Trail Report

John would like to have an initial meeting for the Quabbin to Cardigan grant regarding Moose Mountain. He would like to invite a representative from the Hanover Conservancy, himself, Alan Strickland (chair of the Enfield Conservation Commission), and a Trails Committee member. Doug McIlroy volunteered to represent the committee. There was some discussion about whether landowners should be at that initial meeting, but ultimately it was felt that should wait. Landowners will definitely be involved. When working with landowners, the goal will be to encourage conservation first, trail agreements second, and less formal arrangements third.

No other trail reports.

Due to lack of time, other agenda items were tabled.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Mlačak, Chair