

Cabot Trails Committee
Draft Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2019

Members Present: Andy Gilbert, Paul Wade, Dana Glazier, Gwen Hallsmith, Kris Schmitt, Michael Socks, Gary Gulka

Members of Public Present: Theron Lay-Sleeper

Next Meeting: December 11, 7 pm

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of October 9 approved without changes

Public Comment

Theron Lay-Sleeper said that he is interested in trails and would be willing to help with trail building and maps.

Recap October 26 Landowner Meeting

We will add additional detail to Dan's summary of the October 26 meeting and send this out to meeting invitees and attendees.

Winter Trail Work

It was agreed that we would reach out to Hourihan and Talbert about the possibility of laying out a winter trail for this season. Andy will contact them and see if we can set a date in December to meet at their properties. We will also look into the old Cabot Winter Trail for the possibility of re-establishing this trail with landowner permissions. Gary will contact Russ Brown to see if he has the map detail for the trail. Possible field trip in December to scope out the trail. We discussed use of GPS to mark any trails that we begin to work on (Strava and trailhub.org as possibilities).

East Montpelier Trails Association

Andy and Gary participated in a call with Rick Hopkins to learn more about the experiences of the East Montpelier Trails Association which is a non-profit organization that has also received funding from the town (primarily for trail maintenance). There is an endowment fund from the estate of a former trail user that is used to fund some trail development. The East Montpelier Trails Association has also received town funds through East Montpelier's non-profit funding request process - an advisory committee forwards funding recommendations to the Select Board and a slate of organizations are voted on as a group by townspeople.

Start of non-motorized trails was with town forest and adjacent lands and landowners that were seeking conservation easements through the VT Land Trust. Through the town's conservation fund, 30-35 foot trail easements were purchased from a number of land owners. This is no longer happening - most new trails are done with informal agreements for up to 10 years.

Most trails are year-round, multi-use with restricted use by bicycles and horses from Dec. 1 - April 15. One trail does not allow bikes. Trails are open to dogs. Signs are posted during hunting season to keep dogs on a leash.

Very few trail misuse/vandalism issues have occurred.

East Montpelier Trails has had a vision of a network of trails linking public land to private land and roads to create a network around town. The vision has not been entirely realized as of yet.

Some advice from Rick:

- work with willing landowners and go for low hanging fruit at the beginning
- work with landowners that have conservation easements and may be open to establishing trails
- try to route trails through wooded areas or on farm machinery roads on agricultural lands
- work with landowner, such as flagging a route and develop a plan
- stream crossings can be a challenge because of expense and should be avoided when possible. Rock hopping is a better option. Some crossings will require state permitting and can be expensive

Trail maintenance and expertise - they rely on individuals that have experience

Mary Stone is the executive director. Rick said that either he or she would be able to speak to our committee at a meeting.

2020 Planning and Short-Term To Do List

- Andy to write an article for the December Cabot Chronicle
- Andy to contact Hourihan and Talbert and meet in December
- Complete Breakfast Meeting notes and send out
- Develop budget to submit to the Select Board in the next week - include budget categories of maintenance, signage, maps, public outreach and landowner appreciation
- Annual report for inclusion in Town Report due in early January
- Gary to contact Russ Brown for Cabot Winter Trail map, identification of landowners, and possible field trip to re-establish