

Cabot Trails Committee
Draft Meeting Minutes
February 10, 2021

Present: Andy Gilbert, Michael Socks, Kris Schmitt, Gary Gulka, Dana Glazier, Davis Barnett, Ruth Goodrich

Next Meeting: **March 10, 2021, 7 pm**

This meeting was held electronically in accordance with state open meeting statutes for electronic meetings.

Election of Officers

Chuck Talbert was nominated and elected unanimously as Chair.

Gary Gulka was nominated and elected unanimously as Vice Chair.

Gary Gulka was nominated and elected unanimously as Secretary/Treasurer.

Approval of Minutes

Draft minutes of January 13 approved without changes.

Public Comment

Davis Barnett, a relatively new Cabot resident, is interested in trails for skiing and snowshoeing and is interested in helping with trail maintenance.

Administrative

Draft minutes of January 13 approved without changes.

Gary will report back on remaining budget funds for this year.

Trail Maps and Mapping Software

Andy recommends that we use Trail Links and set up a shared Gmail account. Andy has spoken to Chuck about this. Trail Links will be a nominal cost and should meet our needs.

Trail Use/Etiquette Signage

The Committee agreed on the following trail etiquette rules as a first draft for further discussion at the next meeting:

- Respect all landowners and property on the trail.
- Stay on the trail.
- Keep pets under control and on leash; clean up after your pet.
- Respect other users regardless of sport, speed, or skill level.
- Travel at a safe and reasonable speed.

There was some discussion of equestrian use of trails and whether and how this should be addressed in the future. As of now, we are not addressing it on etiquette rules and signage.

We will also look at Hardwick Trails, Cross Vermont Trail, Groton State Forest, and East Montpelier Trails etiquette and rules for any other issues worth addressing.

Initially, we may print and laminate trail etiquette signs so that they can be easily modified.

Ruth Goodrich asked what the Committee's plan was for trail maintenance. The Committee has had trail workdays, we have a list of Cabot residents interested in assisting in maintenance, we have discussed trail stewards who would be responsible for monitoring and maintaining sections of trails, and we plan to communicate with landowners on their preferences for maintenance and to what extent they themselves wish to do the maintenance.

There was a comment about being mindful of chainsaw safety and working in groups of two more people when conducting trail maintenance.

Trail Updates

Winter Trail – Need to complete landowner permissions for Deasy, Bothfeld and Andrews.

Connections of Lamoille Valley Rail Trail – Upper Harrington Hill Road is an existing connection. Deeper Ruts Road can be pursued. Also, Bricketts Crossing from Cabot into Walden is another option.

Concern about metal signs falling off trees when screwed into trees and how to resolve the issue. It seems that tying the signs with twine or wire may be the better option, considering that some landowners are opposed to nails or screws. Ruth Goodrich mentioned that she has some very strong baling twine that she can make available to try out. The Committee was receptive to trying this.

It was asked who oversees the FaceBook page and whether we should have an additional administrator besides Gwen. This will be discussed at the next meeting. Currently Kris is an administrator but does not want this role.

Talbert Trails

- Need to decide how we are going to mark trail intersections; currently we are writing with permanent marker on the signs with arrows and trail information/directions.
- We need to consider posting a trail map at the sugar house and trail etiquette sign.
- Need to get up to date gpx file on the complete trail network so that we can generate an accurate map.

Hooker Mountain – this trail would involve three landowners, including the future purchaser of Andy's land, Napoli, and Covenant Hills. No action planned on this currently.

Molly's Falls Pond State Park – a discussion should be had with Dept. of Forests, Parks, & Recreation on any future plans for trails in the park. It was suggested that Greg Western of Cross Vermont Trail also be involved with this discussion, since he is involved with trails in Groton State Forest.

Town Forest Trail – loop trail should be considered for the coming year and possibly improvements to parking.

Meeting with NE Trail Conservancy and Cross VT Trail Re: linkage to LVRT

Andy provided a summary of this meeting. In general, the NE Trail Conservancy is exploring linkages between White River Junction area and the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. One option is to use the Cross VT trail and find a passage through Cabot to the LVRT, with a preference for a connection that goes through both the Village of Marshfield and Cabot. Several options were discussed. After the meeting, Andy had a discussion with Greg Western of Cross VT Trail and their consensus was that this could most easily be achieved by using existing town roads – Ducharme Hill Rd over to Cabot Plains and Bricketts Crossing. In other words, this can already be done using existing town roads in a bike friendly route. There will be a follow up meeting in early May.

Trail Work Priorities

In addition to what was discussed the Trail Updates section above, it was emphasized that we need to make progress on mapping software and maps, finalizing trail etiquette signage, and completing outstanding landowner permissions.