

Cabot Trails Committee

Draft Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2021

Present: Michael Socks, Kris Schmitt, Gary Gulka, Dana Glazier, Paul Wade, Chuck Talbert, Gwen Hallsmith

Next Meeting: **May 12, 2021, 7 pm**

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

Approval of Minutes

Draft minutes of March 10 approved without changes.

Public Comment

No public comment

Administrative

Trails Committee budget is \$500 for this fiscal year (ending June 30) and \$500 for next fiscal year which starts July 1. Michael has expenses for sign lamination. Other expenses this year are \$58.93 for trail marking supplies.

Update on Trail Mapping

We will work with the Trail Forks app to begin uploading our trail map data. Paul will take the lead. We may need to purchase the pro version.

Trail Use/Etiquette Signage

Signs (version 2) are completed. Michael has laminated four sets. One set has been given to Chuck. The sign describing allowable uses can be adapted as needed to the landowner's desires for allowable uses by placing stickers over any changes to the basic sign.

It was suggested that we also display information about the Trails Committee and seek volunteer trail stewards.

We began a discussion of trailhead kiosks for display of trail maps and other trail information. It was suggested that we have a bulletin board at the Talbert sugarhouse and also design a two-post kiosk that can be used at other trailheads. There are funds in this year's budget that can be used for purchase of materials. Chuck will look into this further and suggested that we find someone to build them for us.

Trail Updates and Priorities

Chuck plans to be in touch with Luna Guzman to see if we can get permission for a seasonal trail behind the village stores through the meadow on South Walden Rd beyond the rec fields.

In regard to linkages between the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail and the Cross Vermont Trail, there is a need for access from Talbert's to West Hill Pond Rd and from Blodgett Rd to Will Ameden's property. Chuck will be in further contact with Benjie Hodgson who seems receptive to the West Hill Pond linkage across his property. Then we will also need to work with landowners on Blodgett Rd to make the connection to Ameden's.

Chuck mentioned that the Robbins family properties on Last Rd have a network of mountain biking trails developed by Silas and Luke Robbins that they are willing to make part of the Cabot trails network. We will need to get gpx files so we can include this in our network.

Urban Trail to Taylor Rd – need to get permissions from Josh Thompson and Williams. Chuck and Gary will work on this.

Trail markers have been placed near Elm Street Cemetery to complete the signage on this loop. Chuck will be moving some of the trail signs around the sugarhouse and pasture for the summer and will have a mown path to the sugarwoods. He hopes to be in contact with adjacent landowner Roes this summer.

We will have a discussion with the Burtts about trails in the vicinity of the orchard.

Cabot Winter Trail – we will attempt to communicate with landowner Madonka by mail. Gary will get address from Town Clerk. Chuck will send letter with map and we will make it clear as to the limited area we are seeking access.

Town Forest – Agreed that we work on completing the loop trail and finding better year-round access to Town Forest, which may involve using the Town Garage property for parking and access through one additional property. Dana will contact Matt Nally prior to next Tuesday's Select Board meeting, when the Select Board is looking into some logging issues and rights-of-way issues adjacent to the Town Garage property. This may be an opportunity to raise the issue Town Forest access.

Hooker Mountain – this will involve three landowners and will be pursued with some initial contacts, but not a high priority at this time.

Gwen mentioned that we should consider planning a landowner appreciation annual event which was part of our trails plan. It was agreed that we should do this. No timeframe set at this point.

New Business

There was a discussion of how as a committee we should develop trails that involve legal public trails and public rights-of-way that are no longer in general use and in some cases have been abandoned or no longer clearly delineated. In other cases, landowners may have restricted public access to a public right-of-way. Various opinions were expressed by committee members. There was general consensus and acknowledgment that these are public rights-of-way that exist, regardless of current public usage or lack thereof, that have the potential to be part of a public trail network, however, at the same time each of these will have unique issues that will have to be examined on a case-by-case basis. A primary overall goal should be to maintain a positive and cooperative working relationship with adjacent landowners, since our trail network in general relies heavily upon landowner permissions granted. It was also acknowledged that the Select Board has the discretion to discontinue these legal rights-of-way and has done so, or not done so in the past, based on the input of adjacent landowners and town organizations.