

Annual Report of Williamsburg Woodland Trails Committee

The Williamsburg Woodland Trails Committee (WWTC) was established by the Selectboard to work with interested public and private property owners to enhance trail opportunities in town.

Goals of the committee

- To identify existing trails in town
- Work with public and private property owners to improve trails for appropriate community use
- Develop a coalition of all trail users (including hikers, skiers, snowmobilers, ATVers, bikers and equestrians) interested in maintaining and improving Williamsburg's trails.
- Organize and lead hikes on local trails

2017 Hikes

- First Day Hike, met at the Briar Hill Conservation Area for a snowshoe hike to the scenic outlook
- Moonlight Hike, February 11, snowshoe hike at the Big View Trail to scenic outlook and return
- Fall Foliage Hike, October 22, Hill Town Land Trust Breckenridge property from the Rt. 9 kiosk
- Thoreau Bicentennial Hike, July 16, hike from Meekins Library on Mass Audubon's O'Neil Hill trail

Trail Maintenance

Individual committee members worked throughout the year to clean up trail debris, refresh blazes, post signage and perform chainsaw and drainage work on our trails.

- On March 12, Hilltown Land Trust sponsored a workday with WWTC at the HLT Bradley property where members worked to clean up recent storm damage.
- Historic Dam Trail workdays were scheduled throughout the year to perform trail construction and maintenance and the installation of the trailhead kiosk, trailside benches and roadside sign.

Progress continues on the development of the Historic Dam Trail, which provides public access to the 1874 Williamsburg reservoir dam disaster and flood site. During 2017, we constructed and installed trailside benches, the trailhead informational kiosk and roadside sign. Work continued on the improvement of the trail tread and the posting of signage. The town road crew assisted in providing on- street parking and the moving and placement of the flood memorial boulder. The committee received a Massachusetts Humanities Grant of \$7500 to help defray the expense of a Mill River Disaster brochure and trail wayside signage highlighting the Historic Dam Trail and flood disaster, to be produced with The Mill River Greenway Initiative. The committee is anticipating a 2018 summer completion of the main aspects of the project.

To mark the Thoreau Bicentennial Statewide Read in celebration of Thoreau's 200th birthday, the committee was invited by Meekins Library to collaborate in providing a program and woodland hike for the town's Thoreau celebration. On Sunday, July 16th, following a reading of Thoreau's walking essays at the library with Thoreau specialist, Jeffrey Hinich, the committee hosted a hike on Mass Audubon's O'Neil Hill Trail.

Last year through the efforts of Kestrel Land Trust, the towns of Williamsburg and Hatfield acquired parcels on and around Horse Mountain. The committee will work with the Open Space Committee and town Conservation Commission in coordinating the goals of each committee and the development of a trail on the 34 acre Williamsburg portion of the property.

Our town budget was used to purchase equipment and materials for trail construction and maintenance and to promote our trails through our website, and printed materials.

Using Williamsburg's Trails

Information about Williamsburg's trails and current activities is available on our website, www.WilliamsburgWoodlandTrails.org. These trails may cross public and private property, so please respect the trails and properties. WWTC requests that all users follow these guidelines when using local trails.

- WWTC appreciates the Williamsburg landowners who have opened their properties for public trail use. On private and public properties please follow all trail use and property signs
- Please respect all trail uses: hiking, biking, skiing, horseback riding, ATV and snowmobile use are all important trail uses in Williamsburg
- Please stay on trails
- Please be sensitive to natural and cultural resources, remove trash if you find it, and avoid environmentally sensitive areas.
- Please observe property specific guidelines for trail usage by dogs

Respectfully submitted,

Williamsburg Woodland Trails Committee

Committee members: Paul Jahnige, chair, Gwen Blodgett, Dwight Baghdoyan, John Hoogstraten, Eileen Keegan, Sarah LaPointe, Diane Merritt, Karin McGowan, David Weber