

Annual Report of the Woodland Trails Committee

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

Goals of the committee

- To improve and expand the system of existing trails in town for all users
- Respect individual landowner's rights with respect to trails and trail use on their land
- Strengthen the coalition of all trail users (including hikers, skiers, snowmobile and ATV riders, bikers and equestrians) interested in maintaining and improving Williamsburg's trails
- Organize and lead hikes on local trails
- Strengthen the bonds of our community through this effort

Members continue to collaborate with the Four Town Trails Initiative, a cooperative venture involving the towns of Williamsburg, Goshen, Conway, and Ashfield and facilitated by the Highland Communities Initiative (HCI). The project did not receive the applied for grant from DCR Recreational Trails Program this year to proceed with its trails work. Our efforts have been to continue researching possible trail connections from Williamsburg to Goshen and Conway.

We have been collaborating with Mass Audubon to establish a trail from the end of Valley View Rd. into the Mass Audubon property to connect with the O'Neil Hill trail network. The route has been completed but some blazing and signage remain to be done by Mass Audubon.

On May 26, the committee assisted the Trustees of Reservations with an invasive species workshop held at the Petticoat Hill Reservation, specifically aimed at eradicating the garlic mustard located in the area around the reservation entrance.

On June 5, the committee again partnered with the Trustees of Reservations at the Petticoat Hill Reservation for a hands-on workshop on water management strategies used in trail construction and maintenance. Members assisted workshop attendees in using special tools and techniques to stabilize trails damaged by storm erosion.

Members met with the Conservation Commission at the Briar Hill Conservation Area to discuss present and future trail uses on the property.

We used our budget to purchase hand tools, used specifically for trail construction and maintenance, and for promotion of our trails through our website, Facebook and printed materials.

2011 Hikes

- First Day Snowshoe Hike at the Bradley Sanctuary owned by the Hilltown Land Trust
- Big View Trail Hike, March 6, on Unquomunk Hill, canceled due to inclement weather
- Native Breeding Birds Hike, June 11, led by local birder Geoff LeBaron at Mass Audubon Graves Farm Sanctuary
- Fall Hike, Nov. 13, from the Petticoat Hill Reservation to Unquomunk Reservoir and return loop

Trail maintenance

In the spring each member surveys a town trail for clean-up and maintenance needs. Then the following projects were accomplished.

- Individuals from the committee worked to clean up winter debris, refresh blazes, post signage and perform chainsaw and drainage work on trails.
- On October 29, our members and Hilltown Land Trust (HLT) members constructed a new bridge over Blake Brook on the (HLT) owned Breckenridge property, replacing one destroyed by Tropical Storm Irene.
- Members assessed and cleaned up damage on the Petticoat Hill Reservation and other affected trails after exceptional storms-Tropical storm Irene, the Halloween Nor'easter, etc. devastated the area.

Using Williamsburg's trails

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

- Please follow all posted trail use and property signs
- Please respect all trail uses: Hiking, skiing, biking, horseback riding, and ATV and snowmobile riding 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.

Respectfully submitted,

Williamsburg Woodland Trails Committee

Committee members: Paul Jahnige, chair, Gwen Blodgett, Andrew Gould, John Hoogstraten, Eileen Keegan, Diane Merritt