

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:

- Improve 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, snowmobilers, ATV riders, bikers and equestrians) interested in maintaining and improving Williamsburg's trails
- Strengthen the bonds of our community through this effort

The Four Town Trails Initiative, a cooperative venture involving the towns of Williamsburg, Goshen, Conway and Ashfield and facilitated by The Highland Communities Initiative is a plan to connect the trails of the adjacent towns. Williamsburg members attended the initial meeting held in Goshen, May 13, as well as two subsequent meetings with members of the other trail groups. Williamsburg members have been exploring possible trail connections between the Williamsburg Briar Hill Conservation Area and the DAR State Forest trail system and the Conway State Forest.

We submitted a letter of support to the Goshen Open Space Committee for a grant application for trail improvements on their Goshen Town Trail. The grant was approved and we have offered to assist them in their improvement of this trail.

The committee supported naturalist Aimee Gelinas's, application for a grant through the Williamsburg Cultural Council to lead a Spring Ephemerals (wildflowers) hike for the trails committee. The grant was approved and the hike will be held in the spring of 2010.

A letter was sent to the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program supporting the town's application to identify significant landscapes in town. Since then the program has been discontinued due to State budget tightening.

On Sept. 15, members attended an Invasive Plant workshop sponsored by the Trustees of Reservations held at the Bryant Homestead in Cummington .

The committee is exploring the idea of constructing a centrally located town kiosk where information about local trails, historical sites, public gardens and other points of interest would be displayed. We are consulting with Nick Dines on a location and design.

2009 Hikes

- First Day Snowshoe Hike at the Petticoat Hill Reservation and Locke's Loop trails
- Full Moon Hike, Feb. 7, at the Big View Trail on Unquomunk Hill
- Fathers' Day Hike, June 21, at the Petticoat Hill Reservation and Locke's Loop trails
- Among the Deserted Homesteads Historical Hike, Nov.1, led by Eric Weber of the Williamsburg Historical Society

Trail maintenance

- Town resident, Roger Allcroft, for his Eagle Scout project, organized trail maintenance workdays performed by him and his volunteers at the Briar Hill Conservation Area. Roger completed his Eagle Scout requirements by reporting on his project at our November meeting.
- Our committee assisted the Ashfield Trails committee with a spring clean-up of ice storm debris on their trail from Sanderson Academy to Bear Swamp.
- On April 19 we participated in a maintenance day held by Hilltown Land Trust members on their Bradley and Breckenridge properties. Trails were cleared of debris, a bridge repaired, a water bar built, trail blazes were refreshed and new signage installed.
- Individuals from the committee worked to clean up winter debris and improve trail marking and signage on the town owned Hall Conservation Area.

Using Williamsburg's trails

The most up to date information on Williamsburg's trails and our activities is available on our website WilliamsburgWoodlandTrails.org These trails may cross public and private property, so please respect the trails and the 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 users. Hiking, skiing, biking, horseback riding , ATV and snowmobile riding are all important trail uses in Williamsburg
- Please stay on trails
- Please be sensitive to natural and cultural resources. Please remove trash if you find it, and avoid environmentally sensitive areas.

Respectfully submitted,

Williamsburg Woodland Trails Committee

Committee members: Paul Jahnige, chair, Gwen Blodgett, Hannah Gyovai, John Hoogstraten, Eileen Keegan, Diane Merritt, Susan Milsom