

## **2010 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 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 group continues to work to create a connected trail network in the four towns. We submitted a letter of support for The Trustees of Reservations grant application to the DCR Recreational Trails Program for the Four Town Trail project.

On May 15, members attended a day of workshops and presentations at the DCR-HCI sponsored Trail Stewards Training hosted by the Ashfield Trails group, held at Sanderson Academy in Ashfield. Attendees participated in indoor and outdoor sessions including trail design, signage, tools and trail construction.

We met with the Open Space Committee and provided input related to town trails and information on our current activities and future projects for their updated Open Space and Recreation Plan.

We partnered with a Williamsburg Girl Scout troop and helped coordinate a project with them and The Trustees of Reservations to remove the invasive species, garlic mustard, from the Petticoat Hill Reservation entrance.

The director of HCI and members of a future trails group from Cummington attended one of our meetings to discuss our experience of forming and managing a trails committee.

The committee continues to explore 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 landscape architect Nick Dines on a location and design.

We are collaborating with MA Audubon on the possibilities of improving the trail network on their O'Neil Hill property in town.

For the first time we submitted a request and received a small budget from the town for our trail development, maintenance expenses and promotion of our trails through our website, Facebook and printed materials.

### **2010 Hikes**

- First Day Snowshoe Hike at the Williamsburg Briar Hill Conservation Area
- Full Moon Hike, Feb. 27, at the Big View Trail on Unquomunk Hill
- Spring Wildflower Hike, April 11, led by naturalist Aimee Gelinis (Cultural Council Grant) in the Breckenridge Property
- Move it for Meekins Hike, Oct. 24, through the Petticoat Hill Reservation to Unquomunk Reservoir and return
- Invasives Hike, Nov. 7, led by forester Lincoln Fish through the town's Hall Conservation Area and MA Audubon's O'Neil Hill

## **Trail maintenance**

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

- The Briar Hill Conservation Area kiosk was maintained and maps and information updated.
- Individuals from the committee and volunteers worked to clean up winter debris, refresh blazes , post signage and perform chainsaw and drainage work on trails
- Members met with Hilltown Land Trust representatives at the Breckenridge property to plan the installation of a stream crossing bridge which we will construct.

## **Using Williamsburg's trails**

Information on Williamsburg's trails and current activities is available on our website [WilliamsburgWoodlandTrails.org](http://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, horsebackriding, 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, Hannah Gyovai, John Hoogstraten, Eileen Keegan, Diane Merritt, Susan Milsom