

## **2012 Annual Report of the Woodland Trails Committee**

The Williamsburg Woodland Trails Committee (WWTC) was established ten years ago this year by the selectmen 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 landowners 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
- Strengthen the bonds of our community through this effort

Members met with the Conservation Commission to discuss ideas for improvements and ways to assist at the Briar Hill Conservation Area. Under consideration are a parking area, benches, new sign, clear out the vista, mark boundaries, and replace the kiosk information. This year the highway department constructed a parking area, we held a workday to clear out the vista, and we placed new maps and information in the kiosk.

WWTC appointed a representative to serve on the new town Mill River Greenway Committee which with the Williamsburg Village Center Improvement Committee will explore possible greenway connections between Williamsburg and Haydenville.

We worked with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission on the development of its publication of valley trails so that access to our trail maps will be available through a cross link to our website.

Members received copies, reviewed and discussed the proposed Americans with Disabilities Act- Trail Accessibility Requirements.

Our budget was used to purchase power and hand tools used specifically for trail construction and maintenance, and for promotion of our trails through our website, facebook and printed materials.

### **2012 Hikes**

- First Day Hike from the town center through the new Valley View Trail to Audubon's O'Neil Hill followed by refreshments at a neighborhood residence
- Moonlight Snowshoe Hike, Feb. 4, from the Unquomok Rd. trailhead to the Big View lookout for campfire and refreshments
- Tree Bark ID Hike, March 11, at the Mass Audubon Graves Farm Sanctuary with Michael Wojtech, local author of "Bark, a Field Guide to Trees of the Northeast"
- Earth Day Hike, April 22, at the Tilton Town Trail in Goshen, a joint hike with Goshen Open Space Committee- cancelled due to rain
- Williamsburg Woodland Trails 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Hike and Celebration, Oct. 14, at the Briar Hill Conservation Area, with a hike into the DAR State Forest followed by a potluck picnic at the newly cleared Briar Hill vista.
- Late Fall Tree/Shrub ID Hike, Nov.10, with naturalist Aimee Gelinis of Tamarack Hollow, co-sponsored by the Williamsburg Cultural Council and WWTC at Hilltown Land Trust's Bradley Sanctuary

### **Trail Maintenance**

In the spring each member surveyed 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.

- We were invited by Broad Brook Coalition to assist in a workday on April 4, at their newly acquired Haydenville/Northampton property. We agreed to help by sending out the information to our WWT email list.
- Members continued with the development of the new Valley View Trail to Audubon's O;Neil Hill trail network. Blazing and signage were completed by Audubon. WWTC installed "Entering Private Property" signs at either end of the private parcel the trail passes through. WWTC will install "Tree Cookies," steps to traverse wet sections. The trail is usable as is by avoiding wet sections and allows access into the Audubon Sanctuary from town.
- On Sept. 22, we held a scheduled workday at the town owned Briar Hill Conservation Area. The vista at the high point of the property was reopened, the kiosk refreshed with new maps and information, and improvements were made to the trail.

### **Using Williamsburg's trails**

Information on Williamsburg's trails and current activities is available on our website

[www.WilliamsburgWoodlandTrails.org](http://www.WilliamsburgWoodlandTrails.org). These trails may cross public and private property, so please respect the trails and property. WWTC requests that all users follow the guidelines when using local trails.

- Please follow all posted trail use and property signs
- Please respect all trail uses: hiking, skiing, 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, remove trash if you find it, and avoid environmentally sensitive areas

Respectfully submitted,

*Williamsburg Woodland Trails Committee*

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