

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

The Williamsburg Woodland Trails Committee (WWTC) 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 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

The committee met with the Conservation Commission and Lincoln Fish of Bay State Forestry Service to discuss their plan of completing an invasive plant survey and eradication program on town conservation properties. They proceeded with a Forest Stewardship Management plan for the Briar Hill Conservation Area. WWTC offered to assist in the volunteer aspect of the invasive species control

The committee has benefited from Hilltown Land Trust, Mass LIFT (Land Initiative for Tomorrow)- AmeriCorps partner volunteers. The primary project of our spring-fall partner was to assist in the planning and construction of trailhead kiosks for the HLT Bradley and Breckenridge properties and to outfit them with interpretive and informational materials. Our HLT partner also organized a workday at the Breckenridge property and arranged a presentation on local moose population studies by Dave Wattles of UMass, held on May 28, at the Meekins Library. In November we welcomed a new HLT partner who presented project ideas for her winter-summer session with us.

We met with Jonah Keane, new director of Mass Audubon's Connecticut River Valley Sanctuaries, to discuss possible ideas utilizing our involvement with Mass Audubon properties in Williamsburg.

The group initiated and participated in a town sponsored CPR-first aid course.

Members collaborated with a HRHS student intern who has graduated and has continued to instruct members on the development of interactive trail maps for our website.

Our budget was used to purchase sign making templates, trailhead signs, tools used specifically for trail construction and maintenance, and for promotion of our trails through our website, Facebook and printed materials.

### **2014 Hikes**

- First Day Hike, at Petticoat Hill Reservation and Locke's Loop

- Full Moon Hike, February 14, at Mass Audubon Graves Farm Sanctuary, cancelled due to snow
- High Ridge Hike, October 26, 3-4 hr. hike from Henhawk Trail parking to High Ridge and surrounding area

### **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.
- A trail guidelines sign was produced for the Big View Trail, which the landowner will install.
- On June 21, a workday organized by our HLT partner was held at the HLT Breckenridge property. Members of WWTC, HLT and volunteers completed bridge and bog bridge construction and installation.

### **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.

- WWTC appreciates the Williamsburg landowners who have opened their properties for public trail use. On private and public properties 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.
- Please observe guidelines for trail usage by dogs.

Respectfully submitted,

*Williamsburg Woodland Trails Committee*

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

