

Annual Report for 2003 Carlisle Trails Committee

The Trails Committee in 2003 pursued its five major goals: 1) public education, 2) maintaining existing trails on public land, 3) working to preserve trails on private land being developed, 4) creating new trails, and 5) advising the Selectmen on trails issues.

Public education –The committee led five public walks to familiarize townspeople with the trail network. Our 2nd annual full-moon night walk attracted 30 adventurous walkers and skiers to Foss Farm in February on a crystal-clear but very cold night. A beautiful early spring day in April attracted 20 walkers to a tour of Great Brook Farm and the Cranberry Bog. We again cosponsored a vernal pool walk with the Conservation Commission on Earth Day at the Cranberry Bog. Wetlands biologist Chris Kavalauskas amazed the 60 children and adults with the rich life of this small pond on another perfect day. Our weather luck ran out for the inter-community Riverfest celebration on June 7, when rain reduced the group of walkers on the River Trail to six members of the public. The annual after-Thanksgiving walk suffered a similar fate, with only one person joining the Trails Committee on the River Trail on a threatening day. However, the hardy were rewarded with a very unusual flock of two dozen cardinals in the O'Rourke field.

The Trails in Carlisle map book was reprinted in the amount of 250 copies to supply the steady demand at the Town Clerk's office and at Old Home Day. Trail-savvy Tom Brownrigg and Claire Wilcox were winners in an identify-the-trail photo contest at the committee's Old Home Day booth.

Trail maintenance – The committee continued its emphasis on improved trail signage this year. A total of 90 wooden signs have now been carved by volunteer craftsman Hal Shneider and painted and installed by members of the Trails Committee. Large sign panels were installed in the two kiosks at the entrance to Great Meadows wildlife refuge. A trailhead sign kiosk was built for the Conant Land at the Town Hall parking lot; it will be installed next year.

Committee members and many other volunteers participated in trail clearings throughout the year. Parcels of land included Greenough, O'Rourke/Great Meadows, Davis Corridor, Sachs Greenway, Rockstrom, Cranberry Bog, and Hart Farm. Work crews typically went out from 9:00 to 11:30 on Saturday or Sunday mornings. Committee members attended two trail building workshops of the Appalachian Mountain Club to improve our skills in rock work and erosion control. The Committee also assisted the Conservation Commission in nailing the rebuilt split rail fence around the Foss Farm parking lot. Finally, the ConsCom and abutters agreed on a plan to repair the collapsed stone culvert on Old Morse Road trail.

Preserving trails – A trail through the privately-owned Bartlett Farm was rerouted to move it out of land cleared for pasture. The Trails Committee worked with the Planning Board and the Hart Farm developer to fix drainage problems flooding a new trail off the

end of Daniels Lane. We also worked with abutters to the Towle land to move an existing trail off their property and provide better signage from Bingham Road.

Creating new trails – Working with the Carlisle Conservation Foundation, a new trail was cleared and marked on the Clark Farm conservation restriction connecting School and Concord streets. Also with CCF, a new trail was cleared from the end of Ember Lane to Old Morse Road trail. On the DPW land, the trail from the Conant Land to Old Morse Road trail was rerouted away from one of the storage barns. Two new connector trails were created on the Greenough Land. One connects the newly-reconstructed Maple Street bridge to the Blueberry trail near Greenough Pond, replacing an old unofficial trail through an abutter's property. The second, an Eagle Scout project of Boy Scout Craig Pedersen, provides a more direct connection from Maple Street to the former O'Rourke fields at Great Meadows wildlife refuge.

Advising the Selectmen – The Committee reported on recent activity in adjoining towns on the proposed Bruce Freeman Bike Trail, which passes through 900 feet of Carlisle on its way from Lowell to Sudbury. It is time for the Town to develop a plan regarding this regional transportation project.

The Committee is always trying to find better ways to interest the public in our activities. Notices are placed in the *Mosquito* for public walks and work days. We have an e-mail system to notify volunteers of trail clearing and bridge building days, public walks, and monthly meetings. The e-mail contact is verna_gilbert@earthlink.net.

The Trails Committee would especially like to thank the many volunteers from the community who have helped in our trail projects through the year. We also wish to acknowledge the unnamed volunteers who quietly maintain trails in their neighborhoods without direct involvement of the Trails Committee. Without volunteers, the Town wouldn't have its wonderful trail system.

Janet Hentschel retired from the committee after several years of service. Her creative ideas and enthusiasm will be greatly missed. Current members of the Trails Committee are Bob Eaton, George Fardy, Verna Gilbert (secretary), Louise Hara, Marc Lamere, Steve Tobin (chair), and Bert Willard. Report submitted by Steve Tobin.