

Annual Report for 2008 Carlisle Trails Committee

The Trails Committee's big event of 2008 was construction of our longest boardwalk ever (260 feet) on the Catbriar Trail in the Davis Corridor. Many volunteers from the community came out for four fun-filled weekends in September to share the mud, heavy lifting, mosquitoes, camaraderie, and profound sense of accomplishment with us.

The Trails Committee in 2008 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 six public walks to familiarize townspeople with the trail network. A moonlight walk from Foss to Greenough in January attracted 24 hikers on a mild night. In April we cosponsored an Earth Day vernal pool walk with the Conservation Commission at the Conant Land. Wetlands biologist Chris Kavalauskas delighted the 30 children (and adults) with the rich life of this small pond, including fairy shrimp. In June, as part of the regional Riverfest celebration, we led a group of 17 from Foss Farm to the Greenough Land. Two watermelons highlighted the mid-walk picnic at Greenough Pond on a sunny, mid-80s day. On June 29, as part of Old Home Day, 23 walkers joined the Double Sundae Sunday Saunter with stops at both of Carlisle's ice cream stands and a parade down the new Lowell Road pathway. On a beautiful October afternoon, Kay Fairweather led an enthusiastic group of 24 on a mushroom walk in the Davis Corridor. Remarkably, the clouds parted just after a major thunderstorm for the annual post-Thanksgiving walk. 25 people viewed the new boardwalk in the Davis Corridor and continued down Two Rod Road to the Circle Trail in Concord.

The daughter-father team of Claire and Eric Brandhorst earned the Carlisle Trekker Award in November for hiking all the conservation lands in town. They were awarded special patches and certificates and had their picture in the Mosquito. 50 patches were purchased earlier in the year for \$125.

Information on the Trekker Award, as well as trail maps and descriptions, notices for upcoming walks and work days, and a problem report form, can be found at the Trails Committee web site, carlisletrails.pbwiki.com, linked to the Town's web site.

To keep up with brisk sales at Ferns and the Town Office, the Trails in Carlisle book was reprinted. Kevin Smith put in a major effort this year converting most of the town's trail maps to digital format, so our next trail book will have color digital maps. A new trail map of the entire town was handed out at Old Home Day, and it was a big hit.

Trail maintenance – Committee members and many other volunteers participated in trail clearings throughout the year on all parcels of conservation land. Trails were mowed through the Great Meadows fields three times over the summer, and the Clark Farm trail was mowed in the fall. Repairs were made to boardwalks on the River Trail and bridges at Greenough, Rockstrom, and O'Rourke.

Working with the Pathways Committee, the committee provided labor for a small bridge on the new Lowell Street pathway in May, reportedly saving the town \$13,500. Eagle Scout Chris Bojanic built a badly-needed 60-foot boardwalk in the Davis Corridor for his service project in July. CPA funds paid for the materials, as they did for the long boardwalk in September. Chairman Henry Cox wrote a successful grant proposal for \$2,000 to replace the dilapidated Greenough Pond bridge, funded by the SuAsCo Wild and Scenic Rivers small grants program. The wetlands project was approved by the Billerica ConsCom, where the bridge is located; construction will begin next spring.

Preserving trails and new trails – Trail easements negotiated by the Trails Committee, Planning Board, and developer Rob West are included in the new Hanover Hill development on Westford Road. The developer will pay for materials for two boardwalks; the committee will obtain wetlands permits and build the boardwalks. In the Applegrove development on West Street (former Benfield land), the developer built a wetlands boardwalk on a trail easement, and the trails committee cleared the rest of the trail. This is part of a larger trail system to be developed in the next year. The Chestnut Estates development off Rutland Street was approved with trail easements, which were flagged this year. Boy Scout Jeff Pedersen built the new Cow Tunnel Trail on the Towle Land as his Eagle service project in June.

Interfacing with other boards and committees – We have been working with the Land Stewardship Committee on trail management in Town lands, and also prepared a joint town submission for the new Massachusetts Land Conservation Guide. We walked the Benfield conservation areas with the Carlisle Conservation Foundation with an eye to setting up a new trail system in the coming year. We met with the Restorative Justice group and supplied a list of possible projects. We worked with the Pathways committee on the Lowell Street bridge and a town-wide pathways and trail map.

Finances – At year's end there were \$2,380 in the Trail Maps revolving fund and \$5,320 in the CPA Capital Projects fund. The revolving fund was used to purchase a hunter's game cart that was quite useful in moving lumber to the Davis Corridor boardwalk site.

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.

One of the Trails Committee's best friends, Hal Shneider, passed away this year. Hal made almost all of the trail signs you see around Carlisle. The long Davis Corridor boardwalk built this year will be dedicated to Hal next spring.

Current members of the Trails Committee are Henry Cox (chair), George Fardy, Louise Hara, Marc Lamere, Kevin Smith, Steve Tobin, and Bert Willard (secretary). Report submitted by Steve Tobin.

