

Annual Report for 2017 Carlisle Trails Committee

The Trails Committee in 2017 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 four public walks this year. A January 7 snowstorm postponed the full moon hike at the Cranberry Bog to March 11. 14 people walked on a clear but cold and windy night. On April 22, just as the rain stopped, 11 people joined an Earth Day walk in the Davis Corridor where the new intersection markers were featured. The weather was superb for our annual Double Sundae Sunday Saunter on Old Home Day on June 25; 30 people did all or part of the 7 mile loop to both ice cream stands. The annual post-Thanksgiving walk on Nov. 24 featured the Woodward property voted on at Special Town Meeting in October. 41 people viewed the land and trails and learned about the planned goat farming on a beautiful day.

The Trails Committee’s guide book to the Town’s conservation lands, “Trails in Carlisle”, sold out by the end of the year. Work continued through the year on the next edition, planned for mid-2018. Individual trail maps are available on the Trails Committee web site, carlisletrails.pbworks.com. The web site, maintained by volunteer Lisa Ankers, links to the Town’s web site, and also includes information on the Carlisle Trekker Award and notices for upcoming walks and work days. Work continues to create a Trails Committee page on the Town’s web site. Volunteer Kim Schive (Trekker #17) maintains a Facebook page, “Carlisle Trails”, to reach out to a different audience with trail information. Roy Herold corrected Carlisle’s trails as they appear in online Open Street Maps.

The committee made good progress on its multi-year project to add uniquely numbered intersection markers at all major trail junctions in town (outside of Great Brook Farm, which has its own markers). These locations will be shown in the new trail book maps. We are working with art students at the Carlisle Public School to add nature-themed art work to each marker, as a way to raise awareness of trails and conservation land in the students and their families, and to make the markers more interesting to hikers. 32 markers were completed and installed in the Benfield/Bisbee and Greenough areas this year, bringing the total to 79. 65 markers remain to be painted by the students, with completion expected in fall 2019. We installed 27 sign posts in 4 work days this year (April, June, Sept., Oct.) and only 4 remain to be done.

There were six new Carlisle Trekker Awards earned this year for hiking all of Carlisle’s trails: The entire Haring family in July (Piper #34, Alden #35, Reilly #36, Heidi #37, Vaughn #38) and Jonathan DeKock in November (#39).

Trail maintenance and construction – Although there were no hurricanes this year, there seemed to be an unusual number of high wind events. Trails Committee members

removed dozens of fallen trees from trails and cleared brush throughout the year on virtually all public lands. Roy Herold set up a Google Docs spreadsheet to help the committee keep track of clearing work. In addition, we invited volunteers to help in public work days in April (7 people), May (12 people), June (7 people), and October (20 people). Activities included installing sign posts, repairing bridges, rerouting trails, and brush clearing. We have benefitted from many CCHS students and Boy Scouts doing community service.

A major project was building 4 new bridges, filling sink holes, and grading on the Otter Slide Trail after severe beaver damage last year. Kudos to Warren Spence for guiding this project to completion. 30 volunteers helped build the bridges on May 20. Sink hole repair was done in June and October. Materials were purchased with about \$3,900 of CPA funds.

Committee members met with Rodgers Road neighbors who are interested in improving the trail to Banta Davis so their children can walk to school. Much of the existing trail easement is very wet, boulder-strewn, and overgrown with invasive plants. A neighbor indicated willingness to grant an easement in a more trail-friendly location. The committee is working with Town Counsel to draft an easement document. The existing trail location was cleared and existing and proposed trail locations were marked. Boy Scout Robert Nichol volunteered to build one of the two boardwalks that will be required as his Eagle project.

Other maintenance projects included repairing boardwalks in Great Meadows, Greenough, and the Davis Corridor, mowing trails in Great Meadows, Old Morse Road, and Otter Slide, and clearing vegetation from the canoe landing at the Elliott Preserve.

Based on positive feedback about wooden trail benches that were installed last year, the committee developed a list of 10 new locations for benches. They will be built over the winter.

The committee agreed in principle with the US Fish & Wildlife Service to place a shipping container on the O'Rourke property for lumber storage after the existing barn is demolished sometime in the future.

The Trails Committee is working with Boy Scout Richie Chung on a project to replace some of the wooden Bicentennial historical markers that have disappeared in the intervening 43 years.

Preserving trails and new trails – (1) The Woodhaven Farm trail easement was explored at high water in the spring. At the Trails Committee's request ConsCom granted conceptual approval to route part of the trail onto the adjacent Davis Corridor to avoid a large wet area. The Carlisle Conservation Foundation, co-holder of the conservation restriction on Woodhaven Farm, is responsible for building the trail on Woodhaven Farm property. (2) The Conservation Restriction on 20 acres of Sorli Farm on the south side of Westford Street was approved by the state. The Sorli trail to CCF's Ryan Conservation

Land will be marked after a trail parking area is completed. (3) A loop trail was flagged in future conservation land as part of an open space development at 81 Russell Street. The trail will be built after the Town owns the land. (4) Committee members inspected a trail easement in the Lions Gate development on West Street that connects to the adjoining 11.5-acre Pannell Land owned by CCF. The trail will be marked after road construction is complete. (5) The committee supported Town purchase of 6 acres of Woodward land for conservation, approved at Special Town Meeting in October. This is part of a larger project that is expected to result in an additional 32 acres of conservation land, including trail connections to Great Meadows and Maple Street. As noted above, we led a walk on the property in November. (6) As part of a reconfigured plan for 100 Long Ridge Road, Zoning Board of Appeals approval includes a trail easement from Long Ridge Road to common land in the subdivision. (7) Boy Scout Charlie Hutchinson created a new Hidden Pond Trail on the Town's Benfield land for his Eagle project in September. He had to overcome mysterious theft of all the trail location flags hours before the project began and two angry yellowjacket nests in the trail route. (8) Oak Knoll residents Jonathan DeKock and Jim Gettys approached the committee about creating a new trail on the east side of the Mannis Land. After conceptual approval by ConsCom and the Land Stewardship Committee, we plan to work with Jonathan and Jim to find the best location for the trail.

Interfacing with other boards and committees – Steve Tobin is serving on the Deer Committee as the Trails Committee's representative. Marc Lamere is the committee's representative on the Conservation Restriction Advisory Committee.

Finances – At year's end there were \$16,736 in the Trail Maps revolving fund, \$4,202 in the CPA account, \$921 in the Trails Grant account, and \$1,216 in the Gift account. \$467 was donated to the Gift account by a Carlisle mountain bike group after their Carlisle tour.

Acknowledgement - 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. We also thank Lisa Ankers for maintaining the committee's web site.

Current members of the Trails Committee are Alan Ankers (secretary), Henry Cox, Louise Hara (clerk), Roy Herold, Marc Lamere (chair and treasurer), Warren Spence, and Steve Tobin (chair-elect). Bert Willard retired from the committee this year after many years of service as secretary. The committee is fortunate that he continues to attend meetings and help with projects. Report submitted by Steve Tobin.