

Annual Report for 2018 Carlisle Trails Committee

There were three major events for the Trails Committee in 2018: completion of the 2018 edition of Trails in Carlisle, massive trail cleanup after 3 nor'easters in March, and construction of two boardwalks on the Rodgers Road Connector. Throughout the year the Committee 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 this year. A January 27 full moon hike at the Towle Land attracted 34 walkers on a balmy but cloudy night. On April 22, 20 people joined an Earth Day walk at the Greenough Land. On June 16, as part of Riverfest, 19 people did a loop from Foss Farm to Greenough and back with a watermelon stop at Greenough Pond. The weather was superb (70-80 degrees, few bugs) for our annual Double Sundae Sunday Saunter on Old Home Day on June 24; 35 people did all or part of the 7 mile loop to both ice cream stands. The annual post-Thanksgiving walk on Nov. 23 featured the new boardwalks on the Rodgers Road trail and the new trail and boardwalk at Woodhaven Farm. 35 people enjoyed the sunny, snowy landscape in a 4 mile loop from the Carlisle School.

The Trails Committee co-sponsored a talk by Al French on the Bay Circuit Trail at the library on Oct. 18. 40 people came to hear the “father” of the BCT speak and see a video by Dan and Marilyn Brielmann.

After a huge effort, particularly by Louise Hara and David Freedman, the 2018 edition of the Trails Committee’s guide book to the Town’s conservation lands, “Trails in Carlisle”, was completed in time for sale at Old Home Day. 2500 copies were printed at a cost of \$12,216.50. Over 100 were sold at Old Home Day and 25 were given to the Carlisle Police for search and rescue operations. Copies are available at the Town Hall and Ferns Country Store. Individual trail maps are available on the Trails Committee website, carlisletrails.pbworks.com, and the new Town website, carlislema.gov/189/Trails-Committee. The websites also include information on the Carlisle Trekker Award and notices for upcoming walks and work days. Volunteer Kim Schive (Trekker #17) maintains a Facebook page, “Carlisle Trails”, to reach out to a different audience with trail information. Roy Herold keeps Carlisle’s trails up to date 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 are shown in the new trail book maps. We partner 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. 25 markers were completed and installed this year, bringing the total to 104. 40 markers remain to be

painted by the students with completion expected in fall 2020. We installed several sign posts in work days this year and only 2 remain to be done.

Bob Goldsmith earned his Carlisle Trekker Award (#40) in May for hiking all of Carlisle's trails.

Trail maintenance and construction – There was a massive trail cleanup, completed in May, after three nor'easters in March brought down trees all over town. The River Trail was particularly hard hit, with many huge 100-year-old swamp white oaks uprooted. The Carlisle mountain bike group was a big help in the cleanup. Trees came down throughout the year at what seems to be an increasing rate in many wind events. The Google Docs spreadsheet the committee uses to keep track of fallen trees blocking trails had 143 entries for the year, many with several trees, and many trees were cleared before making it to the log. We invited volunteers to help in public work days in April (22 people) and June (11 people). Activities included clearing fallen trees, repairing bridges, installing sign posts, and brush clearing. We have benefitted from many CCHS students and Boy Scouts doing community service. On May 25, 16 CCHS students organized by Trekker #35 Alden Harring and supervised by Roy Herold and Warren Spence cleared fallen trees from field edges in the Towle and Bisbee lands as part of the Prifti Day of Service.

Our major project of the year was building two new boardwalks, 120' and 60', and relocating part of the Rodgers Road Connector trail to avoid wetlands. Making this wet, rocky trail usable had been on the Committee's wish list for decades as it provides a critical link to the Banta Davis playing fields and the school. It finally happened because a neighbor granted a new trail easement allowing part of the wet area to be bypassed and people in the neighborhood pushed to have a walking route to the school for their children. Wayne Davis and Marc Lamere played key roles in obtaining the easement. 21 hardy volunteers waded through mud in a bone-chilling rain on Oct. 13 to install the boardwalk foundations. The weather was more cooperative on Oct. 20 when 26 volunteers built the wooden structures. Materials were purchased with about \$2,700 of CPA funds.

Other maintenance projects included repairing boardwalks in the Rockstrom Land, the Davis Corridor, and two in Great Meadows damaged by falling trees. Volunteer Jonathan DeKock mowed trails in the Town Forest and Foss Farm with his tractor after the Committee confirmed with the Town Manager that volunteers are covered by the Town's liability insurance. The Committee also mowed trails in Great Meadows.

The old barn at the O'Rourke property where the Trails Committee had stored lumber since 1999 was removed by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. The lumber was moved to a nearby open-sided structure.

The Trails Committee created written guidelines for volunteers who would like to adopt a trail. Don Smith became the first, adopting the Blueberry Trail in Greenough.

Preserving trails and new trails – (1) The Woodhaven Farm Trail between Prospect Street and the Davis Trail, including a 40' boardwalk, was completed by Carlisle Conservation Foundation volunteers this year. The Trails Committee will maintain it going forward. (2) The Russell Conservation Land was transferred to the Town as part of an open space development at 81 Russell Street. A trail has been flagged and partially cleared. It is expected to be opened in 2019 after a boardwalk to cross a stream is completed. The developer will pay for half the boardwalk materials. (3) Two Oak Knoll residents who had approached the committee about creating a new trail on the east side of the Town's Mannis Land withdrew their request after neighborhood opposition. The committee received an anti-trail petition signed by 49 Oak Knoll residents. In light of this and the absence of the proponents' support the committee decided not to proceed with evaluating the feasibility of the trail. (4) A new conservation restriction including public trail access at Bartlett Farm is going through the state approval process. A section of existing trail near the Kibby Trail will be relocated. (5) The Woodward Village Residential Open Space Community project is going through the approval process at Town boards. After it is approved, 32 acres of conservation land will be given to the town with trail connections to Great Meadows and Maple Street and trail parking. (6) The committee wrote a letter of support for a state grant to repair the Greenough Dam.

Interfacing with other boards and committees – Melynda Gambino of the Pathways Committee reviewed Pathways initiatives in September. 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 \$6,790 in the Trail Maps revolving fund, \$1,028 in the CPA account, \$749 in the Trails Grant account, and \$2,077 in the Gifts account. In May the committee received a 3-year extension to spend the remaining CPA funds. \$685 was donated to the Gift account by a Carlisle mountain bike group after their Carlisle riding 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 (treasurer), Warren Spence, and Steve Tobin (chair). Jonathan DeKock was appointed as an Associate Member in November. The committee surprised Steve Tobin at the May meeting with an impromptu party celebrating his 33 years on the Trails Committee, including many past members.

Report submitted by Steve Tobin.