

Annual Report for 1998

Carlisle Trails Committee

1998 was the busiest year ever for the Trails Committee. Thanks to Town purchases of land and donations by conservation-minded individuals, we were able to add miles of new trails to the Town's network. This was a welcome change from recent years when we worked to keep the network from shrinking in the face of development pressures. Much of the new trail activity was centered in the Estabrook Woods area in the south of Carlisle. Long-time conservationist Ken Harte was the catalyst for most of the new trail opportunities, together with the Carlisle Conservation Foundation. The first project of the year was re-routing a trail on the McCormick's land (Bartlett Farm) to move it further from their home and partly onto the Town's recently-purchased Carr Land. A public walk in May featured the new trail. A new entrance to the McCormick trails was created on Bellows Hill Road that allows neighborhood trail access to Estabrook Woods. This trail also connects to a parcel of land donated to the Town by Nancy Rockstrom as part of a Conservation Cluster development. A new trail was created on the Rockstrom land, going from School Street to an existing trail that links up with the Carr Land and McCormick trails. A third trail was blazed on the Sachs Greenway, running from the end of Baldwin Road to the Two Rod Road Trail near the Concord town line. A fourth trail was created on the Malcolm Land, connecting Two Rod Road to the handicapped accessible trail near Stearns Street. All of these trails were marked with round metal markers featuring a hiker on a blue background. This is something new, saving much installation time over the hand-painted blue blazes we have used in the past. Also on the Malcolm Land, the handicapped accessible trail was extended to the Malcolm Meadows elderly housing and the public parking lot adjacent to Two Rod Road. This was a large community volunteer effort headed by the CCF.

The purchase of the O'Rourke Farm by the Town provided another opportunity for new public trails. A trail plan was worked out with other Town boards and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, expected to purchase the property in the near future for addition to the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. Committee member Louise Hara wrote a successful grant application to the state Greenways program to fund boardwalks and signs for the O'Rourke trails. The grant was a first for the Trails Committee. On a glorious October weekend, over 60 volunteers turned out to build three boardwalks across wetlands on the property. This was also a first for the Committee in terms of large construction projects, and it went splendidly. Connector trails were built on the O'Rourke land and the adjacent Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, creating a 3-mile uninterrupted trail from Foss Farm through Great Meadows and the O'Rourke Land to the Greenough Land. The public was invited to hike the new trail on another beautiful afternoon the Saturday after Thanksgiving, and over 100 people joined the walk. This was by far the largest turnout we have ever seen for a public walk.

In another major project, the Trails in Carlisle booklet was revised and updated in time for Old Home Day. New maps were created for South Carlisle trails, including the ones

mentioned in the first paragraph of this report, and for the Bisbee Land/Spencer Brook reservation. Existing maps were checked and updated, and additional text was added. Sales were brisk at Old Home Day and the booklets continue to be in demand at the Town Clerk's office (\$5).

"Carlisle Jack" Innella's crew of trail clearing volunteers kept busy through the winter removing storm damage from all of the Town's trails, in the vain hope that there would be enough snow for skiing. Perhaps 1999 will be more fruitful. New volunteers are always welcome for trail clearing – a great way to see new parts of Carlisle, enjoy the outdoors, get some exercise, and do something useful.

Carlisle's trails benefited this year from the efforts of the Town's Scouting groups. In Boy Scout Eagle projects on the Towle Land, Steven Foster and helpers built a bridge over a stream in one area, while Brian Walsh and crew built a boardwalk across a wet area of the field. The Boy Scout troop built four bridges on the Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge just in time for the Thanksgiving walk. A Cub Scout Webelos den cleared the Otter Slide trail connecting the Cranberry Bog to the Old Morse Road trail.

The Committee was enriched this year by an infusion of new volunteers, both voting members and associate members, including Janet Hentschel, Jay Patrick, Kieran Nunan, and Jan Tore and Ruthann Hall. Co-chair Steve Tobin received the Conservationist award this year from the Conservation Commission, joining fellow committee members Judy Lane and Betsy Fell in being so honored.