

Annual Report for 2000

Carlisle Trails Committee

The year 2000 found the Trails Committee busy with its five major activities: 1) public education, 2) maintaining existing trails on public land, 3) working to preserve trails on private land being developed, 4) creating trails on new public land, and 5) advising the Selectmen on trails issues.

Public education – A large effort went into creating the 2000 edition of the *Trails in Carlisle* booklet. Several new trail maps were created for parcels recently open to the public (O'Rourke Farm/Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge; Hutchins/Robbins fields and Hart Land on Curve Street) and most of the existing maps were revised. Local artist Phyllis Hughes contributed drawings of Castle Rock. The booklet is available in the Town Clerk's office for \$5. The Town Clerk reports it was a hot seller for holiday gifts.

This may be the last version of the map booklet with laboriously hand-drawn maps. The committee began investigating digital mapping technology, with trails overlaid on digital USGS topographic maps. Members have mapped about half the town's trails with global positioning system (GPS) units. The goal is to have all-digital maps in the 2002 edition of the trail map booklet. This will greatly simplify the revision process.

The committee led several public walks to familiarize townspeople with the trail network. We concentrated on the new trails in the River Meadows Reservation, making a 3-mile loop from Foss Farm to Greenough Pond along the River Trail, then back through the O'Rourke farm. This walk was held three times. We had a good turnout in late February (28), scant attendance on a rainy, raw day in early November, and a tremendous turnout (55) on the sunny day after Thanksgiving. We also held an Earth Day walk at the Cranberry Bog in April, in hard rain, and a blustery Dec. 26 walk through Great Brook Farm state park and the Cranberry Bog.

Trail maintenance – Committee members and many other volunteers participated in trail clearings throughout the year. Parcels of land included Bisbee, Greenough, Davis Corridor, Sachs Greenway, Rockstrom, O'Rourke/Great Meadows, Cranberry Bog, Old Morse Road, and the State Park. Work crews typically went out from 9:00 to 11:30 on Saturday or Sunday mornings. Volunteers also built a bridge across a stream on the Rockstrom trail in November, installed two small bridges across ditches in the Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge, and repaired the vandalized bridge at the end of Greenough Pond. We also continued our major project to open up and improve trails at Great Meadows. We completed installation of trail markers on the River Trail from Foss to Greenough, and installed several laminated directional signs. A clear window and trail information was added to the sign kiosk at the Foss Farm parking lot. A wooden sign and wood chips were installed at the Foss Farm entrance to Great Meadows to make the trail more obvious. Our annual tally of volunteer labor at Great Meadows, part of our agreement with the Fish and Wildlife Service, came to a surprising 213 hours, from August to August. This included a large effort at the grand opening of the O'Rourke property the previous fall.

The Trails Committee made its first major equipment purchase, a DR Trimmer (heavy-duty wheeled string trimmer), for \$693 in the fall. This was prompted by the need to maintain grassy

and weedy trails, particularly those at the O'Rourke farm.

Preserving trails – Trails were successfully preserved or created in several parcels of land undergoing development. Several trail easements connecting to town land and a 75-acre donation of land to the town came from the Hart development on Curve Street. Clearing and marking these trails will keep the committee busy for the next few years. A trail connecting two parts of the State Park was preserved in the Gould development on Rutland Street. Open space given to the town as part of a conservation cluster development of the Buttrick Woods development on Concord Street has trail possibilities. Close cooperation between the Planning Board and Trails Committee played a major part in all of these preservation efforts.

Creating new trails on public land – A plan has been developed for perimeter trails around the Hutchins and Robbins Fields on Curve Street, recently purchased by the town. These will link up to the new trails in the Hart property and in the adjoining Swanson conservation land. A new trail access to the Carlisle Pines State Park is also planned through the Swanson Family Land parcel at the end of Barnes Place, donated to the town this year.

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. Contacts are Jack Innella at jinnella@hotmail.com and Verna Gilbert at Verna_Gilbert@hotmail.com. A Trails Committee room was also set up in the new Carlisle Community Center on the web (<http://carlisle.lotus.com/cc/recept.nsf>). The room includes a calendar of upcoming events, a bulletin board to post questions or opinions, and a filing cabinet with meeting agendas and minutes.

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.

Current members of the Trails Committee are Bob Eaton, George Fardy, Verna Gilbert (secretary), Louise Hara, Janet Hentschel (co-chair), Jack Innella (volunteer coordinator), and Steve Tobin (co-chair). We wish to acknowledge the many contributions of members who stepped down this year: Judy Lane, James Patrick, and Steve Pearlman.

Submitted by Steve Tobin