

Annual Report for 2001 Carlisle Trails Committee

The Trails Committee kept busy in 2001 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 –The committee led several public walks to familiarize townspeople with the trail network. We cosponsored a vernal pool walk with the Conservation Commission on Earth Day at the Conant Land. An enthusiastic group of 40 children and adults learned about pond creatures with the help of two wetland biologists. An October walk at the Cranberry Bog coincided with the colorful cranberry harvest. Prior to the November Town Meeting, we led a well-attended walk at the Town Forest to allow voters to see this land first hand. Also in November, a hardy group walked from the Conant Land to the Cranberry Bog and back on Old Morse Road and other little-known trails. A highlight was recent beaver activity along the Otter Slide trail.

Trail maintenance – The committee chose improved trail signage as a focus for the year. We started with the Towle Land, identifying trail junctions needing directional signs. Local craftsman Hal Shneider generously volunteered to create wooden signs with routed lettering, which were installed by members of the committee. The Greenough Land is the next conservation parcel on our sign list. Wooden directional signs were also installed near the Great Meadows entrance from Foss Farm, and we installed new boundary signs for the Conservation Commission at many of the trail entrances to conservation land. A clear window was added to the sign kiosk at the Greenough parking lot.

Committee members and many other volunteers participated in trail clearings throughout the year. Parcels of land included Greenough, O'Rourke/Great Meadows, Davis Corridor, Sachs Greenway, Cutter's Ridge, and the Malcolm land. Work crews typically went out from 9:00 to 11:30 on Saturday or Sunday mornings. The DR Trimmer purchased last year was put to good use mowing paths through fields at the O'Rourke farm and Foss Farm.

One of the committee's major projects, together with the Conservation Commission, was removing the trees and brush from the deteriorating Greenough Pond dam so that it could be inspected by a hydraulic engineer. This was a four-weekend project completed in July, involving 160 man-hours of effort by the committee and many other volunteers.

The committee struggled much of this year with two major repair projects needed on the Old Morse Road trail – an ancient stone culvert that washed out in the spring, and serious erosion from stormwater road runoff. Progress has been slow, but we hope to complete the projects in the spring with help from an excavation contractor hired by the Town and the Department of Public Works.

The town's trail network benefited greatly from four Eagle scout projects of Carlisle Boy Scouts. In May, Andrew Daltas created a perimeter trail on the Banta-Davis land, giving access to the new playing fields from the school. In September, Richard Bruce built a boardwalk over a wet area in the Davis Corridor. In November, Brian Boule cleared a new trail in the Hart development, connecting it to the Town's Robbins Field conservation land. Also in November, Eric Pedersen built three bridges, two in the Greenough Land and one in Great Meadows wildlife refuge, to cross old agricultural ditches. Congratulations to these young men on achieving Scouting's highest honor. A group of Boy Scouts also removed blowdowns in the Davis Corridor as a community service project.

Preserving trails – The Emmons and Fidler/Beauchamp families gave a trail easement to the Carlisle Conservation Foundation for an existing trail connecting Woodridge Road to the CCF's Poole Swamp property. This trail continues to the Town's Rockstrom Land and eventually to Estabrook Woods. This was a Conservation Foundation project, but the Trails Committee will assist in relocating a small section.

Creating new trails on public land – Two new trails were cleared in the Hart development off Curve Street, one connecting north to the Otter Slide trail and one south to the Robbins Field (the previously-mentioned scout project). A new trail access to the Carlisle Pines State Park was created through the Swanson Family Land parcel at the end of Barnes Place, donated to the town last year. Preparations were made for a boardwalk wetland crossing south of the Foss Farm parking lot, to connect to the cornfield along Bedford Road. In a successful experiment, the heavy concrete bumpers used for boardwalk foundations were moved into place on a toboggan over snow in the winter. However, a lack of funds for lumber has delayed the building of the boardwalk.

In April, the Trails Committee gave a special award to third-grader Ivy Conover Santos, who walked every single trail in the *Trails in Carlisle* map booklet with her mother, Jan Conover. This is the first time we have been notified of such a feat.

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 Verna Gilbert at Verna_Gilbert@hotmail.com and Jack Innella at jinnella@hotmail.com.

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 (chair), Janet Hentschel, Jack Innella (volunteer coordinator), and Steve Tobin. Report submitted by Steve Tobin.

