

Annual Report for 2005 Carlisle Trails Committee

The Trails Committee planned to build two boardwalks on the River Trail as its major project of 2005. However, Mother Nature had other plans. After months of planning, permitting, purchasing materials, cutting lumber, moving materials to the remote site (thanks to Gary Davis and the DPW crew), setting foundation posts, and recruiting volunteers, weeks of torrential rains in early October brought the Concord river over its banks and put an end to any thoughts of construction. The River Trail lived up to its name as we scrambled in canoes and chest waders to lash piles of lumber to nearby trees before they floated away. The high water continued through the end of the year, pushing out construction until early fall of 2006.

On a more successful note, a beautiful arched wooden bridge was built in November, connecting the Town's Rockstrom trail off School Street to a trail in the Carlisle Conservation Foundation's Poole Swamp property connecting to Woodridge Road. The unique structure was engineered by Bert Willard and Steve Loutrel and funded by CCF.

The Trails Committee in 2005 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 to familiarize townspeople with the trail network. Our first pre-Superbowl afternoon walk in February took a group of 17 skiers, snowshoers, and walkers on the River Trail from Foss Farm to Greenough pond and back. In May we again cosponsored a vernal pool walk with the Conservation Commission at the Conant Land. Wetlands biologist Chris Kavalauskas amazed the 29 children and adults with the rich life of this small pond. In June, as part of the regional Riverfest celebration, we led a group of 19 from Foss Farm to a picnic at Greenough Pond. On a hot and buggy day, ice cold watermelon was a big hit. This walk was also part of Biodiversity week, with Kay Fairweather collecting and identifying mushrooms. Later in June, as part of the town's Bicentennial celebration, we sponsored the Double Sundae Sunday Saunter. With equal measures of history, gluttony, and perspiration, this 7-mile steambath of a walk included stops at both Kimball's and Great Brook ice cream stands, with local history talks by Anne Marie Brako and Rebecca Markey. Finally, the annual after-Thanksgiving walk attracted 21 people to trek the Davis Corridor to the Circle Trail in Estabrook woods in an inch of new snow.

An updated Bicentennial edition of the Trails in Carlisle map book sold briskly at Old Home Day. It is now available at Ferns Country Store, as well as the Town Clerk's office. Copies of the updated maps were supplied to the police and fire departments, and are included in the 2005 edition of the town's Open Space and Recreation Report. The committee also contributed sections on accomplishments and goals to the report.

Trail maintenance – Committee members and many other volunteers participated in trail

clearings throughout the year. Trail clearings were undertaken at Carlisle Pines, O'Rourke/Great Meadows, Davis Corridor, Bisbee Land, Sachs Greenway, Greenough, Clark Farm, and the Town Forest. New trail signs were installed in the Davis Corridor and on the Otter Slide trail in the Cranberry Bog property. Boardwalk flooding by beaver dams near the O'Rourke farm became more of a problem this year as the beaver colony expanded. Repeated dam removal by Trails Committee members provided momentary satisfaction and a great deal of exercise, but in the end the beavers won. "Beaver deceiver" pipes will be tried next year. Finally, the long-delayed project to replace the collapsed stone culvert on the Old Morse Road trail moved toward completion this year but was thwarted by the same October floods that stopped the River Trail boardwalks.

Preserving trails – The committee worked on plans for a trail network in a large development on Cross Street with the Planning Board, developer Bill Costello, and the neighborhood. Boardwalks and a durable surface trail will be installed by the developer as part of the subdivision process, allowing the active Cross Street walking community to get off the narrow road with its increased traffic.

Finances – The annual Town Meeting approved \$15,000 in Community Preservation Act funds to be spent over the next 5 years on materials for future boardwalks, bridges, and signage. A list of specific projects was part of the approval. This is the first time the Trails Committee has had direct town funding, thanks to the persistence of chairman Marc Lamere. The materials for the delayed River Trail boardwalks were funded by a \$4,000 grant from the Fields Pond Foundation and from the Trails Committee's revolving fund.

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.

The Trails Committee lost one of its mainstays when Bob Eaton moved to New Hampshire this year. Fortunately he returns to help whenever asked. The committee was happy to welcome Henry Cox as its newest member. Current members of the Trails Committee are Henry Cox, George Fardy, Verna Gilbert (secretary), Louise Hara, Marc Lamere (chair), Steve Tobin, and Bert Willard. Report submitted by Steve Tobin.