

Annual Report for 2007 Carlisle Trails Committee

The Trails Committee in 2007 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. A moonlight walk at the Cranberry Bog in January attracted 19 hikers on a cold but windless night. In April we again cosponsored an Earth Day vernal pool walk with the Conservation Commission at the Greenough Land. Wetlands biologist Chris Kavalauskas delighted the 18 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 35 from Foss Farm to the Greenough Land. Two watermelons disappeared at the mid-walk picnic at Greenough Pond on a sunny, mid-80s day. On July 1, as part of Old Home Day, 38 walkers joined the Double Sundae Sunday Saunter with stops at both of Carlisle's ice cream stands. Despite the chilly 60s temperature, hikers contributed to the local economy and listened to talks on local history. Finally, the annual after-Thanksgiving walk attracted 25 people on a sunny but cold day to the Towle Land to see the new Turtle Trail and the new boardwalk.

Prompted by Selectman Doug Stevenson's idea, the committee established the Carlisle Trekker Award for residents who hike a comprehensive list of trails (35 miles) and help with at least one trail work day. The Award, first announced at Old Home Day and in the Mosquito, consists of a special patch, sequentially numbered certificate, and a place on the honor roll of Carlisle Trekkers. Our first winner was Mary Zoll in October, followed by Kelly Guarino in December. Associated with the Trekker Award, distances were measured for all publicly-accessible trails in town, with a total over 49 miles.

Through the efforts of committee member Kevin Smith, the Trails Committee now has a web site – carlisletrails.pbwiki.com, linked to the Town's web site. The site includes trail maps and descriptions, notices for upcoming walks and work days, a problem report form, and a Carlisle Trekker Award page with rules, downloadable log sheets, and a list of winners. Kevin ~~is~~ also ~~creating a trail layer to add to~~ the town's GIS system ~~in 2008~~.

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To keep up with brisk sales at Ferns and the Town Office, the Trails in Carlisle book was reprinted.

Trail maintenance – Committee members and many other volunteers participated in trail clearings throughout the year. Trail clearings were undertaken at O'Rourke/Great Meadows, Davis Corridor, Greenough, Towle, Clark Farm, Estabrook Woods, and Hart Farm. Trails were mowed through the Great Meadows fields three times over the summer. We undertook a major project at Great Meadows to remove old barbed wire fences through the winter, spring, and summer. 115 steel posts and many rolls of barbed wire were removed.

In an unwelcome development, we had our first taste of trail sign vandalism when wooden signs and the barn at the Greenough Land were spray painted by hooligans.

Continuing a trend of recent years, three new boardwalks were built by committee members and other volunteers. On May 27, after a 1-week rain delay, a 50-foot boardwalk was built at Bartlett Farm by 17 volunteers. The \$1300 cost of materials was donated by landowner Peter George. On November 4, a 30-foot boardwalk was built by 16 volunteers at the Towle Land on the trail to Bingham Road. On November 10, after a 1-week delay for hurricane Noel, 20 volunteers completed a 130-foot boardwalk in the Davis Corridor. This followed 3 previous work days to cut lumber and move materials, with major assistance from Gary Davis and the DPW. The latter two projects used CPA funds approved by Town Meeting in 2005.

The boardwalk flooding by beavers near the O'Rourke farm continues to evolve. The boardwalk was under water early in the year, but the summer's drought completely dried up the beaver pond. The "beaver deceiver" pipes continue to provide some drainage when there is high water in the pond.

Preserving trails and new trails – Three new housing developments are developing and preserving trails for public use. The Greystone Estates conservation cluster development on Cross Street includes a trail system and boardwalks installed by the developer. Final trail surfacing is expected next spring. The Chestnut Estates conservation cluster development on Rutland Street, which includes preservation of part of the old Rangeway Road trail and new trails in conservation land donated to the town, was approved by the Planning Board. The Hanover Hill development on Westford Road is moving through the approval process, again with expected trail easements and input from the Trails Committee. These efforts are facilitated by strong Planning Board support and by Trails Committee members who also serve on the Planning Board: Louise Hara, who retired this year, and Marc Lamere, who was elected.

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A trail on the Greenough Land was moved out of a pasture, recently converted to corn field, and into bordering trees with the help of several high school students doing community service. Boy Scout Jimmy Burnham built the new Turtle Trail on the Towle Land as his Eagle project, working closely with Native American representatives. Jimmy explained the significance of the Turtle during the post-Thanksgiving walk.

Interfacing with other boards and committees – We have been working with the Land Stewardship Committee on trail management in Town lands, including a joint meeting in March, a shared booth at Old Home Day, and review of management plans.

Finances – At year's end there was \$2,704.33 in the Trail Maps revolving fund and \$10,837.69 in the CPA Capital Projects 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.

Current members of the Trails Committee are Henry Cox (chair), George Fardy, Louise Hara, Marc Lamere, Kevin Smith, Steve Tobin, and Bert Willard (secretary). Report submitted by Steve Tobin.

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