

Annual Report for 2009

Carlisle Trails Committee

The Trails Committee in 2009 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 six public walks to familiarize townspeople with the trail network. A moonlight walk at the Cranberry Bog in January attracted 19 hikers; highlights were fisher tracks and mysterious snowmen. In April we cosponsored an Earth Day vernal pool walk with the Conservation Commission at the CCF's "Benfield E" land. Wetlands biologist Chris Kavalauskas revealed the rich life of this ephemeral pond set in a beautiful hemlock grove to 24 attendees. There were no takers for a rainy June Riverfest walk from Foss Farm to the Greenough Land, but Trails Committee members had a nice time. On an unusually cool June 28, as part of Old Home Day, 27 walkers joined the Double Sundae Sunday Saunter with stops at both of Carlisle's ice cream stands. On a beautiful October afternoon, 24 walkers toured the Greenough land, some looking up to admire the fall foliage and some looking down at mushrooms and truffles with Kay Fairweather. The annual post-Thanksgiving walk explored the State Park and Chelmsford's appropriately named Thanksgiving Forest. Only committee and family members braved the cold rain, but they were rewarded with a cornucopia of baked delights at the end.

In a first, chair Henry Cox appeared on the Council on Aging's CCTV program to talk about Carlisle's trails.

Work continued on a new version of the Trails in Carlisle book, with color digital maps, targeted for mid-2010. The Carlisle Conservation Foundation is providing technical and financial assistance with the book as part of its upcoming 50-year anniversary. In the meantime, the 2005 version of the book continued to sell briskly at Ferns and the Town Clerk's office.

Trail maps and descriptions, information on the Carlisle Trekker Award, notices for upcoming walks and work days, and a problem report form, can be found at the Trails Committee web site, carlisletrails.pbwiki.com, linked to the Town's web site.

Trail maintenance – Committee members and other volunteers participated in trail clearings throughout the year on all parcels of conservation land. Repairs were made to a boardwalk on the River Trail that had suffered winter ice damage. A sign kiosk that was being replaced at Great Meadows was repaired and moved to the Towle Land. Two major construction projects were done this year. A group of 21 hardy volunteers helped tear down and replace the 50-foot trail bridge at the end of Greenough Pond in early April. The project was funded by a grant from the SuAsCo Wild and Scenic Rivers program. On one of only three rainy days in September, a new 75-foot boardwalk was built in the Town Forest with the help of 26 volunteers in a record 2 ½ hours. CPA funds paid for the materials. The long Davis Corridor boardwalk built last year was dedicated

to the memory of sign maker Hal Shneider with a plaque and small ceremony in May. In an alarming development, large chunks of lichen-encrusted stone ledge, prized by landscapers, were ripped from the ground and stolen from town-owned conservation land in the Greystone development and adjacent private land under conservation restriction. The theft was reported to police by the Trails Committee, and we assisted the private landowner in installing signage to prevent further damage to his land.

Preserving trails and new trails – In more welcome news, three new trails were added to the town's network this year. A new trail in the Hanover Hill development on Westford Road was cleared and marked in August by 15 volunteers, linking the development to the Virginia Farme neighborhood. In October, the new Twin Peaks Trail was cleared and marked from West Street to a loop in the CCF "Benfield E" land by 16 volunteers. This trail, featuring dramatic topography and the vernal pool mentioned earlier, also traverses the town's "Bow Tie" lot, newly designated by Town Meeting as conservation land. The next day, Boy Scout Tim Lamere and volunteers built the new Greystone Trail in the subdivision of the same name, linking Captain Wilson Lane to Bingham Road, for Tim's Eagle service project.

Interfacing with other boards and committees – The Trails Committee participated in two successful coordination meetings of all town conservation-related committees and groups, organized by the Land Stewardship Committee. We provided a map and input to the Selectmen supporting the transfer of the "Bow Tie" lot to conservation use. We met with the Carlisle Conservation Foundation to discuss approaches for a major boardwalk across the Spencer Brook wetland, connecting the Bisbee and Benfield parcels.

Finances – At year's end there were \$3,054 in the Trail Maps revolving fund, \$3,584 in the CPA Capital Projects fund, and \$956 in the SuAsCo grant account.

Acknowledgement - 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, George Fardy, Louise Hara, Marc Lamere, Kevin Smith (chair), Steve Tobin, and Bert Willard (secretary). Report submitted by Steve Tobin.