

Friends of North Andover Trails

Meeting Minutes – 22 May 2019

6.00 PM – 7.15 PM

Meeting Attendance: 12 people participating

Membership: 3 new members. Jeanne Velde and Glen Aspeslagh agreed to send out an email message soon, asking members to renew. Some discussion on whether we should put all members on one renewal date, with some adjustment for a part year dues. Thought to be too complicated. Current system sends out emails with past paid date included. Should we increase the dues from \$10? No decision.

Treasury Report: Steve Dennen reported an approximate \$15k bank balance. Town reimbursed the Edgewood Trail expenses (\$5k) to the NA Improvement Society; check has yet to make its way to FONAT. The expenses for the BSF Boardwalk #5 to be submitted when complete to the AMC (Fields Pond Grant) for reimbursement. Nothing significant to note.

Guidebooks: According to Stan Limpert, the guidebooks are still selling, especially at Rocky's.

Reports from the Trails: In general, the trails are in good shape. Very few reports.

A discussion on “Adopt a Trail” program involved some suggestions to simplify (versus the on-line reporting form). It is still thought to be a good way to get people involved in the trails and in FONAT. It should be discussed more at the monthly walks and the out-reach events. The on-line form may need to be revised. First step to include something in the spring newsletter. Liz Armstrong to send the current “small guidance card” to those interested.

A downed tree near Farnum boardwalk was reported by Joe Lehmann/Jim Murphy and that information was sent to the DCR for removal. Tom Powers has taken down the “beaver flooding sign” and any BCT markers showing an exit to Sharpner’s Pond Rd, replacing with orange/town markers. Sign saved for future needs.

Thoughts about creating a “trail work” list appropriate to inquiries from corporate and school groups, and beyond just trash pick-up, included:

1. Fuller Loop/BSF – routine trail maintenance (cut back)
2. Ward Reservation – wet areas on North Andover side (would potentially need conservation commission approvals and materials).
3. Install signs/posts

More information, more ideas would be welcome. Areas where unskilled people could complete the work with minimum FONAT involvement and no significant approvals needed.

Events Recap:

Earth Day: Clean-up on South Bradford St, up to the stop signs, completed. Steve Foster arranged for the pick-up of tools/gloves and for DPW to pick up the bagged trash during the event. Always an interesting array of trash.

May Monthly Walk: Led by Rob Jones into Ward Reservation via Brightview. Small group (~12 people, including many FONAT leaders). Some wet areas, including a rock hop across a stream – difficult for some. Should send the locations to Adam/Trustees for potential repair. Also, came upon some old style Bay Circuit Trail markers. Need to follow-up with Andover BCT rep to replace.

Sheep Shearing: Thanks to Joe Lehmann for coordinating. Up/down attendance because of the weather, but we did get some new people for the email list, some interested in work days, some interested in “adopt a trail” program. We are relying on those interested to get back to FONAT via the website. Would be good to have more follow-up from FONAT to those interested, or something to handout to those interested.

Updates on On-Going Projects – 2019 Goals:

Edgewood Lake Trail: Jim Murphy reported that some work on extending existing boardwalks to cover more muddy areas was completed in May. Final work is planned for June. All remaining lumber has been moved to the Edgewood kayak site, for truck removal, should it not be needed.

BSF Boardwalk #5: Mike Agosti organized 2 work days in May to build the 4 sections of boardwalk needed to cross the stream. They are ready for transport to the site on June 8th. An all call email will be sent just prior to this work date. The conservation commission has been notified by letter that all work on this project should be substantially completed on this date and 100% by end-September.

Mills to Hills Boardwalk: FONAT has committed to construct the needed boardwalk this summer/fall. Steve Foster to organize all aspects. At the time of the meeting, we did not know if the conservation commission approvals have been received or are still needed. Or, the design.

Ecology Sign (Farnum Boardwalk): Not on the agenda and not discussed, but Lisa Roberts and Deb Monte are making progress on this sign. A first draft of the narrative and layout has been completed. Lisa has been getting quotes/requirements from sign vendors that have been used by Andover Trails and AMC.

Color Core Signs: No discussion.

New Trail Guide: No discussion.

New Business/General Discussions:

New Canopy/Tablecloth – Events: Not on the agenda, but after significant damage to the current canopy, the option of upgrading the canopy and tablecloth was progressed by Joe Lehmann. After soliciting a lot of input via email, Joe circulated his proposal to meeting attendees. It's has a much stronger structure, with actual tie-downs for windy days and uses the trail marker/FONAT logo on both the canopy and the tablecloth design. We are staying with green. Looks very professional without being “over the top”.

Artisan Market Days: No discussion, but FONAT has agreed to participant in one day.

Half Mile Hill Chairs: Liz Armstrong reported that the two existing chairs had been substantially repaired (new arm, sturdy fasteners, etc.) making them like new. Last month we had agreed to purchase two replacement chairs. It was decided to go ahead with the original decision. In addition, two more chairs are being donated bringing the potential total to 6 places to sit and enjoy the view. A plea to not remove the current chairs was made; we don't know who is repairing them, but there is obviously a desire to keep them in place. One has a memory marker on it.

Trustees: Adam Black is leaving trustees and taking a position with Philips Academy. Big loss for Trustees and FONAT.

Town Conservation Administrator: Jennifer Hughes has departed North Andover for the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission. She is still helping the town until the new administrator is hired and is in place. Jennifer says she will still be available for FONAT, if needed.

DCR: Bill Cooksey has been appointed to the previously vacant eastern area supervisory position. He comes from outside the SF/SP's. He has met with Friends of HPSF, the AMC/BCT and other key non-profit/volunteer groups.

Edgewood Grant: Glen Aspeslagh will collect a \$1,000 recognition grant from the Edgewood Residence Group this month.

Upcoming Dates:

Workday at Mazurenko: June 1st

Monthly walk – Woodchuck Hill: June 2nd

BSF Boardwalk #5 – Install: June 8th

Meeting Minutes Submitted by: Liz Armstrong, 24 May 2019

Meeting Minutes – 28 November 2018 (cont.)

Updates on On-Going Projects:

- **Signs:** the first 4 trail signs produced from the Color Core material were brought to the meeting and looked great! The FONT used in these signs will become the standard for all future FONAT trail signs.
- **Farnum Project, Lake Trail Project:** discussed as part of the 2018 accomplishments.
- **Rea's Pond Kiosk:** Map and other kiosk material is ready to be produced when the kiosk construction is completed. DPW is expected to reimburse FONAT for costs.
- **Cyr – Stonewall BCT:** In early stages, gaining inputs from town agents for this property and the conservation commission and reviewing options for design. CP grant deadline is Feb 1. Also, we may need to be on the agenda for the Dec CP meeting.

2019 Goals (attached): In reviewing the status of the 2018 goals, we identified five (5) projects that had to be completed in 2019. We agreed that these will be our priorities and we will only add other projects, especially construction of boardwalks and bog bridges, when these are completed. These, plus maintaining the monthly walks and participating in key town outreach project, constitute the 2019 GOALS for FONAT. We will maintain another list, a "5-year strategy", of potential projects and other areas of improvement identified. Most came from the current 2018 list, but others can be added once identified.

2019 Monthly Walks' Schedule: Great response from the leaders. Most months have been taken, walks identified. Some fine-tuning required because of duplication of months/walks. We need more walks on town trails, including the new Lake Trail. Discussion about shifting July and August from Sunday PM to Saturday AM (due to summer heat); will review with specific leaders for those two (2) months. We decided to reduce the Essex Heritage Sails/Trails from 2 walks to 1, by eliminating the Sat walk.

Town Events: Maintain a presence at Sheep Shearing, National Night Out, NA Merchant Association Event. Unless there is a specific desire and availability of resources, we will not participate in the Artisan event or the Farmer's Market.

Upcoming Events: No December meeting. Instead we will have a Holiday Party on Friday Dec 14th. December/9th hike is on James Swamp trail; at least 4 people are available to help.

2019 “Must Do” Projects and Goals

- Complete/install the ECO-Beaver sign as required in the Cell Technology grant.
 - Preference is still to create an information area with multiple information signs near the Berry St. parking area and access to the upper Cyr athletic fields.
- Construct and install a boardwalk in BSF on the BCT, as part of the re-route through Middleton, using the Fields Pond Grant.
- Finish the Lake Trail project, including removing all excess wood.
- Continue to produce and install trail signs using the ColorCore material for town trails.
- Organize the content for the 2nd Edition of the Trail Guide
- Maintain the monthly walks.
- Participate in three (3) key/specified town events.

FONAT's 5-year Rolling List of Potential Projects and Goals

- Continue to support and expand the "Adopt a Trail Program".
- Expand the number of Leaders and Co-Leaders for the monthly walks.
- Install key road and trail signs on the Bay Circuit Trail.
- Add two (2) trails to the Bruins Hill area, jointly with Greenbelt.
- Consider adding nature walks when more leaders are available.
- Replace the stone wall walk on the BCT near the Berry St parking area with a new boardwalk.
 - Secure CP funds in 2019.
- If required, secure 501c3 status.
- Resurrect the Town Farm trails.
- Define what is needed at the Wind Rush Farms/trails.