

Exeter Conservation Commission
Trails Committee
Meeting Summary 9/22/2016

Agenda:

The meeting was held at the Exeter Public Library at 7:00 pm with approximately 25 attendees. Jay Gregoire was the facilitator. Here for record is the published agenda:

- Agenda 1. Overview of the Timber Harvest Activity and Forest Management Plan
2. Existing Trail Maintenance Needs Fall 2016, Spring 2017
3. Long Term Trail Management
4. Future Trail Needs
5. Other Business
6. Next Meeting: Date

Summary Notes:

Logging Overview:

Charlie Moreno, Registered Forester, and consultant to the Conservation Commission provided an overview of the recent Town Forest harvest. The key items of the presentation were:

- The harvest followed the recommendations of the Forest Management Plan which is available on the Conservation Commission (Con Com) web site.
- The FMP indicated two areas within the Henderson Swazey Forest-The NW area which is not included in the logging area and the SE area, adjacent to the pipe line, which was logged this past winter and spring.
- The logging is now complete and now further logging will take place. The next logging of the area may take place in 15 to 20 years.
- The purpose of the harvest is to assist the natural development of the forest in having a diverse species of trees rather than the extensive growth of Beech and Birch that now exists.
- The revenue from the harvest will allow the Con Com to take action to remove invasive species that are now spreading in the action area. In about 5 years there should be an

effort to remove the new Beech and Birch that grow back so that other tree species can thrive.

- Some attendees expressed concern about the logging impact and wanted to know how long the recovery period would be. The forest will reseed and grow new trees and undergrowth in 5 to 10 years. It was pointed out the two areas that were logged 15 to 20 years ago have recovered.
- Charlie explained the purpose of the small areas that were cleared; to assist in the natural process of tree reseeding. He suggested that those areas be closed from traffic so that the reseeding can take place. The meeting then shifted to a discussion of trail use and maintenance needs

Trail Management and Needs:

- There was a general discussion of known trail deficiencies such as decayed board walks.
- Comments were also made regarding “rouge” trails and how to address that issue.
- It was agreed that the Con Com assisted by the trail users needs to acquire real time information and data on trail conditions and use so that an effective trail maintenance plan can be developed. That plan can then be used to develop priorities.
- There was also a discussion of the Con Com budget and the limited funds available for trail maintenance. While limited, there have been adequate funds for trail maintenance given that the work has been and will continued to be accomplished by volunteers.
- A follow on discussion was focused on communication and networking. Suggestions were made regarding an email network as well as acquiring GPS data for the trails.
- There was also a discussion of trail conditions, leaf blowing, rock removal, trail “braiding”; i.e. the expansion of trails around difficult conditions. The consensus was that leaf blowing and rock removal should be prohibited. Cyclists prefer the challenging conditions. Steps should be taken to limit trail bridging.
- There was also consensus that updated trail maps are needed.

Take Away Items:

Map the recently logged area to show trails, new open spaces, and skidder roads.

Develop a comprehensive e-mail list of stakeholders and trail users.

Communicate to all stakeholders and trail users.

Conduct an on-site trail review session(s) to identify trail maintenance needs and to acquire trail use data.

Acquire trail GPS data from trail users

Hold another trail review and discussion session with the aim of confirming the use of present trails, closure of trails (if necessary) as well as specific trail maintenance projects.

Minutes: Don Briselden

