

2008 TOWN FOREST REPORT

The following are highlights from the town forest this year:

Trail maintenance was performed throughout the year by hikers and mountain bikers as they frequently visited the forest. As a result the trails were in excellent shape.

Repairs to the loop road and Root Hill Road completed last year have held up well. The gates installed at the lower end of the loop road and cables on the upper ends have been closed at the end of hunting season and opened when conditions dry up in early summer. This has been highly successful in minimizing damage from 4 wheel drive traffic, which was a big problem in past years.

Jim Fitch and Ginny Prince picked up trash on the Tandy Brook road frontage on Sunday April 20th. Doughnuts were generously provided by Cora Farnsworth.

The trail blazes painted in 2000 are starting to fade. To remedy the situation in a more durable way, Kate Freeland applied for grant money from the Tasker Covered Bridges Fund, for plastic trail markers. Look for these to be put in place during 2009.

A hike to the Eagle's Ledge lean-to for a picnic was held on August 9th. The scouts have also made good use of the lean to for camping out. This lean-to is available for anyone to use, just be sure to keep the area clean and carry out what you carry in. During dry seasons, a 4 wheel drive vehicle can drive south on Root Hill Road to within 50 yards of the shelter. Please stop in!

A highly successful work day was held on Sunday Nov. 2, attended by approximately 1 dozen volunteers. The Jaarsmas, Doug Freeland, Doug Miller and Jim and Sue Fitch cleaned up water bars on Root Hill Road. Water bars accessible by tractor on the loop road and lower Root Hill were maintained by Ginny Prince earlier. Roger Stone along with Jim Osterlund led a group of the Tuesday night mountain bike riders (headed by by Jason Ouelette from Claremont Cycle Depot) to completely redeck the long bridge on the blue trail. Treads were cut from larch left over from the Plainfield School bridge project and carried in by hand from the power line. The bridge was then covered with chicken wire donated by Bob and Louise Anderson of Walpole, NH, to create a non slip surface. Bill Palmer and Ginny Prince worked to control invasive buckthorn on a section of the power line, by moving logs and other debris to allow the area to be mowed. Kate Freeland documented the progress in pictures. Many, many thanks to a lot of hard work done this day by all the cheery volunteers!

The town forest continues to be very popular for hunting. There were many deer hunter visits during bow, muzzle loader and rifle season and the deer population appears very active. The town forest is open to all licensed hunters in season.

The committee would like to encourage visits by nature viewers, hikers, skiers, snowshoers and cyclists. There are maps posted on all the trails a short distance in from

their starting points, and there is a container of paper maps at the posted map on the trail from Tandy Brook Rd. In addition maps are available at the town office.

From time to time there is interest in scout or other youth or community projects; the current To Do list follows. If interested in working on any of these items contact any of the committee members.

To Do List:

1. Improve and maintain erosion control structures on Root Hill Road, the loop road, and power line. Add a gate on the power line at the south forest boundary to complete ATV control when the soil is soft.
2. Burn the brush at the lookout to tidy up and revitalize existing blueberry patches
3. Inventory the flora and fauna of the town forest, ideally with photographs, and document tree growth over time.
5. Make and install signs - directional signs for the trails, no motor vehicle signs where needed, possibly more detailed signs at the forest entrances explaining permitted activities, same as on the back of the trail maps.
6. Archeology study - find and map the foundations, stone walls, etc., find the privy and trash pits and excavate, research the history of residence and land use, etc.,
7. Create an interactive guide to the town forest for school age kids.
8. Release and prune apple trees (second go-round)
- 9- Construct privy building for the Eagles Ledge lean to.
10. Design and at least begin a way to quantify and then monitor the growth of buckthorn, and other invasive plants.
11. Place new trail markers.

As in past years, the town forest budget includes no tax money. Because state law requires that any funds, donation or payment or otherwise, must be authorized in the warrant, the forest management committee is requesting permission to spend up to \$1500 for trail marking materials and other miscellaneous items for repair and construction of signs, bridges, gates etc.

For more information or to share thoughts about the town forest contact any committee member:

Ginny Prince, chair
Jim Fitch
Kate Freeland
Bill Gallagher
John Hammond