



# Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

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Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

## Horse Hill Nature Preserve Subcommittee of the Merrimack Conservation Commission

### Minutes of the Meeting

December 9, 2013

7:00 p.m. Matthew Thornton Room

**Attendees:** Newton Coryell, Roland Roberge, Matt Caron, Amanda Yonkin, Debra Huffman

**Guests:** Angela Martin, Tim Adams

**Call to order:** Chairman Newt Coryell called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**Volunteers:** Debra reported that the brochure *Insects of HHNP*, written by Molly Jacobsen, has been placed in the Amherst Rd kiosk. She expressed the committee's thanks to Molly for a job well done.

Debra reported that Andy Steeves, president of the Merrimack Rotary, said that the Rotary is still interested in placing GPS signs on HHNP. The committee agreed that more signage is needed and this could be a good project. They discussed the following:

- GPS coordinates are good for rescue calls. For hikers who want to know where they are and which trail they should take, GPS coordinates alone are not enough. Ideally, each sign should have a map of the property, a 'you are here' marker, the GPS coordinates, and distances to adjacent posts.
- The signs must be waterproof, small enough to be attached to the existing posts without covering the trail names, yet large enough to be legible. The design will be challenging.
- Tim Adams, a member of the Friends of Horse Hill and a guest at the meeting, stated that he had all of the GPS coordinates of all posts and mileage from post to post. He will send this information to Debra.
- Debra will place Tim's information on a map (and make other updates to the map at the same time) and will send this information to Andy Steeves for the Rotary's consideration. She will invite Andy to attend the spring meeting of the HHNP committee.

**To Do List:** The committee reviewed the 2013 to-do list and updated it for 2014:

1. **Finish marking the HHNP perimeter:** No progress. Will try again in spring.
2. **Work on new signs with GPS/mileage:** In progress. See above.
3. **Place better markers on existing trails:** Matt Caron has a catalog of sign markers. The committee voted 5-0-0 to authorize Matt to order markers, preferably with reflective paint.
4. **Make improvements near post #14 (top of Rocky Trail):** Matt reported that people are not stepping up onto the bridge he built. He will build ramps and will build a rock wall to block the flow of water.

5. **Erosion on the Loop Trail, past Post #2:** Newt and Roland will work on this.

**Reappointments:** The MCC voted to extend terms of all current committee members by three years.

**New Trails and Trail Conditions:** Matt Caron reported that the November 16<sup>th</sup> trail work day was very successful and most of the materials were used. Workers included Harry Watt, Don LaLibertie, Tim Tenhave, and Steve ?, as well as committee members Matt Caron and Debra Huffman.

Matt reported that he has finished the work on the Quarry Trail that was discussed at the September meeting. The exposed roots have been getting worse every mud season. To make the trail safer for users with the least impact to the soil, he and a volunteer crew, which included neighbors from the Naticook Road area, installed an 80' boardwalk.

The committee discussed placing gates on the steep section of the Blodgett Hill Summit trail to encourage visitors to use the new route. The gates could be closed for spring, summer and fall but left open in winter to allow snowmobile use. Matt stated that when the MCC replaces the gates at the parking lots the old gates might be available for use on the Blodgett Hill Summit trail.

**Winter Preparations:** Newt Coryell reported that he will put posts near Ryan's bridge and by the Watanic Bowman bridge to keep his snowmobile from falling off while dragging the trails.

Newt will call Mike Amarillo to ask about the snowshoe race. Roland will post the date in the kiosk. The date should be posted a week in advance so visitors can plan accordingly. The committee discussed whether race participants could use the Bowmen's parking lot rather than park along Amherst Rd during the race, but that parking lot is not plowed so parking is not possible there in winter.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of September 30, 2013, were approved as presented by a vote of 4-0-1 with Amanda Yonkin abstaining.

**Comments from the Public:**

- Angela Martin, who lives near HHNP, stated that she is interested in becoming a member of the committee. She sent an e-mail to the Merrimack Conservation Commission. Matt Caron will present her letter of intent to the MCC.

Angela asked whether the parking lot on Amherst Rd can be expanded. The committee replied that it cannot be expanded due to the wetlands. The committee could explore other locations for additional parking, such as the PSNH land on Naticook Road.

- Tim Adams stated that additional markers are needed on both Ledges Trails. Once snow is on the ground it's easy to get lost. The committee agreed that more markers are needed on these trails.

Tim also asked about the Horse Hill Summit trail closure during heron nesting. He stated that the trail is part of his normal hiking route and he does not understand why it has to be

closed for such a long time. The committee informed him that they were following Audubon Society recommendations.

**Comments from Members:**

- Newt Coryell stated that he will speak with John Hall to discuss how to better block ATVs and dirt bikes from entering through the Watanic Bowmen property. Perhaps a better gate on Old Kings Highway would be useful. Additional rocks around the existing gates would also be useful.
- Newt reported that he visited with Barbara Watson to tell her about the memorial bench being planned for her late husband Harold Watson. The Watson family will be invited to the dedication in the spring. Newt gave Matt Caron the proposal for building materials, and Matt will bring it to the MCC. Matt suggested adding a map showing the exact location of the proposed bench.
- Amanda Yonkin stated that she's happy to be back on the HHNP committee. She previously served on both the HHNP Master Plan and HHNP Definitive Plan committees.
- Roland Roberge stated that visitors have told him how much they enjoy the new route for the Blodgett Hill Summit trail.
- Roland asked that the committee send its thanks to whoever leveled the parking lot. Matt stated that he asked Kyle Fox to thank Continental Paving.
- Matt Caron stated that the hemlock boards need to be moved from the DPW garage. Deb will contact James Jolly to see if he would like to take some of the boards for his Souhegan River trail project.
- Matt stated that he spoke with the owner of the Taylor's old house on Abbey Road. For several days, a hunter parked in front of their house and walked through the easement into HHNP to hunt. They left a note on the hunter's car and he hasn't been back. They are concerned about shooting in general on HHNP. Matt informed them that sounds of target shooting are likely coming from the Greens Pond shooting range, not HHNP.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Newt will book a conference room.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.