

Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 21st, 2016
7:00 PM

Location: Franklin Wood Studio, 232A Main Street, Rutland, MA 01543 (Behind Police/Fire Station)

Members: (Members in **BOLD** were present)

Massachusetts Council of Sportsmen: Robert Carey, William Label

Alternate: Mike Moss

Worcester County League of Sportsmen: **John Root**

Alternate: Dave Papale

Trout Unlimited: **Jeffrey Schaaf (Co-Chairman)**

Alternate:

A Rod and Gun Club: **Joe Cataldo**

Alternate: Brian Waterman

Barre Selectboard: **Martha Varnot**

Alternate: **Edward Yaglou**

Hubbardston Selectboard: **Thomas Bratko**

Alternate:

Oakham Selectmen: **Thomas Hughes**

Alternate: Phillip Warbasse

Rutland Selectmen: **Charles R. Williams**

Alternate: **Brett Russ**

Barre Historical Society: Burt Frost

Alternate: Peg Frost

Hubbardston Historical Society:

Alternate:

Oakham Historical Society: Wes Dwelly

Alternate: Bill Mucha

Rutland Historical Society: Helen Viner

Alternate: Tim Nahrwold

Massachusetts Wildlife Federation: Bill Westaway (Co-Chairman)

Alternate: Thomas Berube

Massachusetts Audubon Society: **Martha Gach**

Alternate:

Sierra Club: **Matt Hopkinson**

Alternate:

Upper Ware River Watershed Association: Donald Rich

Alternate: **Edward Yaglou**

General Public: Mark DuBois

Alternate: **Dave Small**

DCR Staff Present:

Herm Eck, Justin Gonsor

Members of the Public Present:

Jassy Bratko, Bill Dobson, Margo Petracone, Dean Zuppio

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Start Time: 7:00 PM

Approval of Minutes of Meeting on November 5th, 2015

Dick Williams made a motion to accept the minutes from the WRWAC meeting held on November 5th, 2015. John Root seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Rail Trail discussion – Hunter Signage

Herm Eck talked about signage that has been put up along the rail trail since the last meeting. At least 6 signs have been placed along the trail. These signs encourage people to wear hunter orange, alert people to hunting seasons, and remind people that it is illegal to shoot down or across the trail.

Matt Hopkinson mentioned that a lot of people aren't aware that there is no hunting on Sundays in Massachusetts. He suggested putting that reminder on signage.

Dick Williams suggested putting up a kiosk at the parking lot at the end of Fisherman's Road. This would consolidate all of the signage in that area to one place and make it easier for visitors to understand what is and isn't allowed.

Dave Small suggested taking the hunting signs down in the summer and putting them back up for the fall/winter season when the signs are more relevant.

Rail Trail discussion – Leash Laws

Herm Eck talked about new signage that has been made for the rail trail but has not been put up yet. The signs ask people to please use a dog leash – 6’ or less. DCR is looking for volunteers to put up the signs. Dick Williams suggested that the Wachusett Greenways Group might be able to help.

Martha Varnot asked if this leash law applies to the snowmobile trail that is located in the Williamsville area. Herm Eck wasn’t sure about that piece of land specifically because it is not managed by DCR- DWSP, but mentioned that DCR- DWSP’s policy is that dogs need to be under control of their owner; there is no wording about dogs needing to be on a leash.

Hubbardston Land Swap

Herm Eck updated the committee on the final stages of a land swap between DCR-DWSP and the town of Hubbardston. 12 acres of land north of Rt. 68 that was formerly owned by DCR will become the property of the town of Hubbardston while 68 acres formerly owned by the town of Hubbardston will now be owned by DCR.

Open Space Committee

Jassy Bratko presented a proposal to the committee on behalf of the Hubbardston Open Space Committee. The group is proposing to add two pre-existing cart roads in Hubbardston to the Mt. Jefferson/Malone Conservation Areas and Hubbardston/Templeton State Forest Trail System. These cart roads can be seen on town maps dating back to 1860. The committee worked with the former MDC to preserve the Mt. Jefferson Conservation Area in 2002 and who preserved the Malone Road Conservation Area in 2007. They are requesting that all trails be marked, named, and added to trail maps. The Open Space Committee would like to assume all responsibility for doing this work and for the ongoing maintenance of the cart roads. The addition of these roads to the trail system would provide another two mile loop. Currently, these two roads are owned by DCR-DWSP. The committee requests that the roads be authorized for multi-use with the exception of ATV’s which are not permitted on any of the trails. Handouts that include the proposal as well as trail maps were handed out to committee members. Those handouts are attached at the end of these minutes.

Herm Eck mentioned that DCR has not looked at the proposal as of yet.

Dick Williams asked if there were any conservation restrictions on the property. Tom Bratko talked about how the Malone Road Conservation Area does not have a conservation restriction while the Mt. Jefferson Road Conservation Area does, but that all their trails were written to be multi-use. Matt Hopkinson asked about whether or not there are different restrictions east of Mt. Jefferson Road vs. west of the road; he would like clarification on that issue.

Herm Eck thought that since the proposal is a change to existing access, it should be brought to DCR the next time the Ware River Watershed Public Access Plan is updated.

Jassy Bratko talked about the Open Space Committee's long term goal of mapping the entire trail system in Hubbardston.

Brett Russ made a motion to support the proposal as written. John Root seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Member Issues

Dick Williams has heard that there are buried barrels of hazardous waste somewhere on DCR property near the intersection of Upper Intervale Road and Rt. 62. If possible, he would like those barrels found and removed. DCR hasn't found evidence of these buried barrels.

Dick Williams asked if DCR has a back-up plan in place for when the people who are currently maintaining the rail trail are no longer able to do so. Herm Eck said he wasn't aware of any specific back-up plan, but that DCR owns the land and would be responsible for managing it. There was discussion about the condition of culverts along the rail trail.

Brett Russ asked if there is an agreement between Wachusett Greenways and DCR in regards to management of the rail trail. Dave Small mentioned that there is a MOU in place regarding general maintenance, but that long-term maintenance of bridges, etc. fall to the state. Brett Russ asked if there were any plans to find out what Wachusett Greenways succession plans are. To find out, Dick Williams would have to talk to someone from Wachusett Greenways.

Dick Williams heard about some gravel banks/pits in Hubbardston that are being filled in and was wondering if any were on DCR property. Tom Bratko answered that there are none on DCR property or in the Ware River Watershed. No proposal has been submitted to the town yet. The type of fill proposed is dirt that has the least offensive classification in terms of contamination. There was discussion on whether or not DCR would allow these types of fill on their land. Matt Hopkinson made a motion to ask DCR if they would give an opinion on whether or not they would allow this type of fill on watershed property. Tom Bratko seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. Herm Eck asked to be sent the information on what is specifically being proposed to be put in those pits in Hubbardston.

Dick Williams drafted a letter on behalf of the WRWAC requesting that DCR purchase an additional brush cutter machine for the Ware River Watershed. That letter is attached at the end of these minutes. Dick Williams made a motion to send the letter to DCR. Ed Yaglou seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. If purchased, Brett Russ recommended it be stored under cover as opposed to outdoors.

Brett Russ offered an agenda item for the next meeting. He would like to talk about forming a Friends of the Ware River Watershed Group; what that means, entails, etc. It will be on the agenda.

Meeting End Time: 8:01 PM

Upcoming WRWAC Meetings

- Thursday, March 10th, 2016 at 7 PM – Franklin Wood Studio, 232A Main Street, Rutland, MA 01543 (Behind Police/Fire Station)

Proposed Additional Maintained Trails in Hubbardston, Ma

Contact Info: Jassy Bratko, Hubbardston Open Space Committee, jassy.bratko@gmail.com, 508-331-4975

Proposal: To add two, pre-existing cart roads in Hubbardston, to the Mt. Jefferson/Malone Conservation Areas and Hubbardston/Templeton State Forest Trail System (see attached maps). These cart roads can be seen on town maps dating back to 1860.

Who: This proposal is being submitted by the Hubbardston Open Space Committee. It was this committee who worked with the former MDC to preserve the Mt. Jefferson Conservation Area in 2002 and who preserved the Malone Road Conservation Area in 2007. While the land is under the care and control of the Hubbardston Conservation Commission it is the Open Space Committee that is responsible for implementing the management plan of both areas. Among many other things, the committee has worked to create a mapped, marked, named, multi-use trail system in both properties that connects with trails in the abutting Hubbardston/Templeton State Forest. The committee has worked closely with DCR Division of Parks and the Hubbardston Conservation Commission to improve trails in the state forest and conservation areas, and it maintains them on an ongoing basis.

Explanation: The Hubbardston Open Space Committee is requesting that Malone Road and the McFarland Road be added to the existing trail system. It requests that the trails be marked, named and added to trail maps. The Open Space Committee would like to assume all responsibility for doing this work and for the ongoing maintenance of the cart roads. The addition of these roads to the trail system would provide another two mile loop.

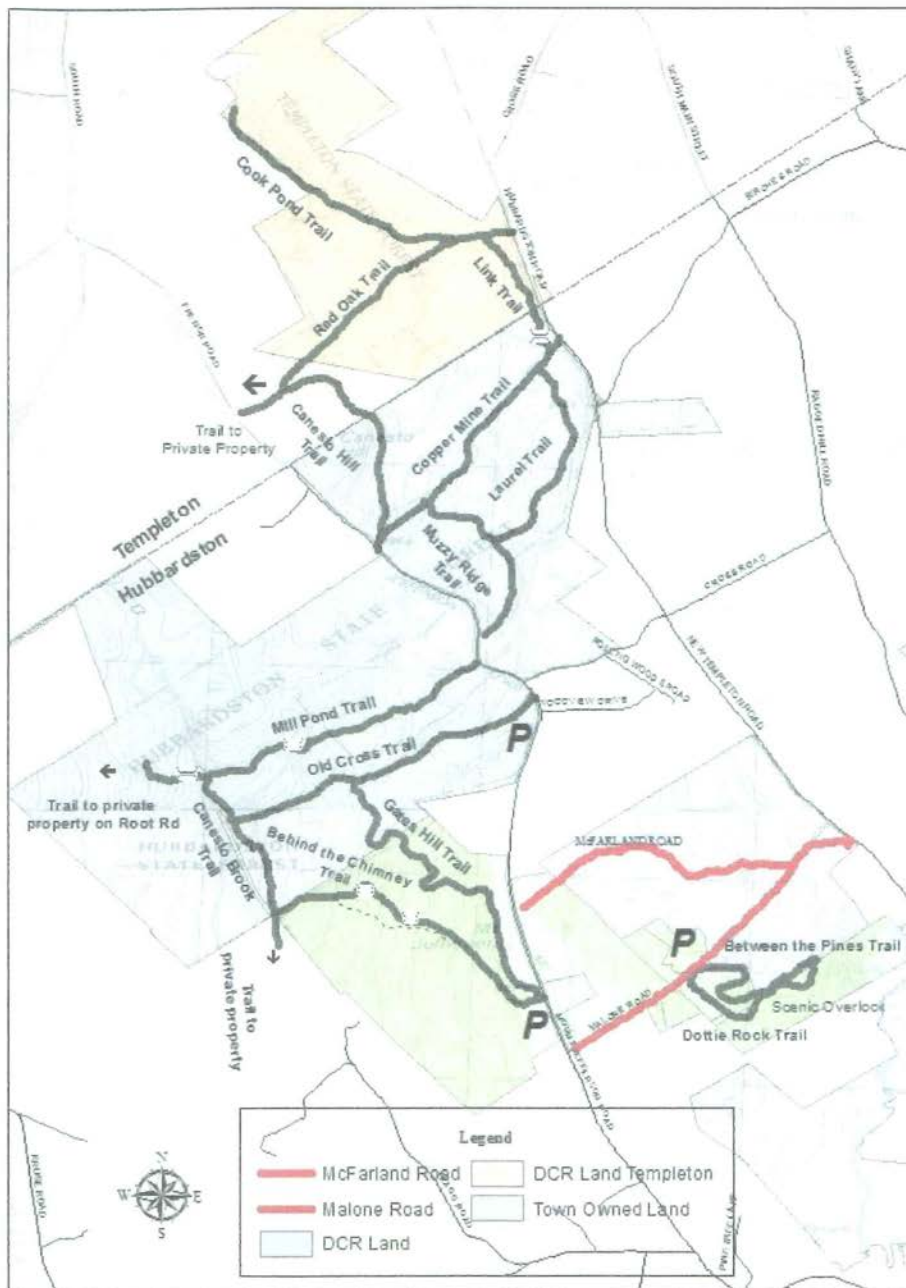
Malone Road is an old town road that extends from Mt. Jefferson Road to New Templeton Road. It is still a town road from Mt. Jefferson up to the Malone Road Conservation Area but it is discontinued from the conservation area to New Templeton Road. It is still a very clear, accessible cart road but trees are down across it in certain sections. It can be seen on old town maps.

The second trail has a proposed name of McFarland Road because it can be seen clearly on old town maps dating back to the mid 1800's. Presumably the road connected the McFarland Homestead to Malone Road as a quicker way of reaching the town center than travelling down Mt. Jefferson and Williamsville Roads. It is a wide cart path and needs very little maintenance at this time.

Both of these roads are on land owned by DCR, Division of Water Supply Protection. The Open Space Committee would like DCR permission to add these two cart roads to its maps, to mark them, put up name signs and maintain them on an ongoing basis. The committee requests that the roads be authorized for multi-use with the exception of ATV's which are not permitted on any of the trails. The roads cross a very small stream in two locations but the stream flows through well-made culverts that were obviously put in place when the roads saw more traffic. Users would therefore not enter the water or degrade the water at any point.

It should be noted here that, although DCR owns over one third of the town of Hubbardston there are extremely few trails that are open to horses, no official mountain bikes trails and the only official snowmobile trail is on the DCR rail trail. These two trails would be excellent for those uses in addition to hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

PROPOSED ADDITIONAL MAINTAINED TRAILS



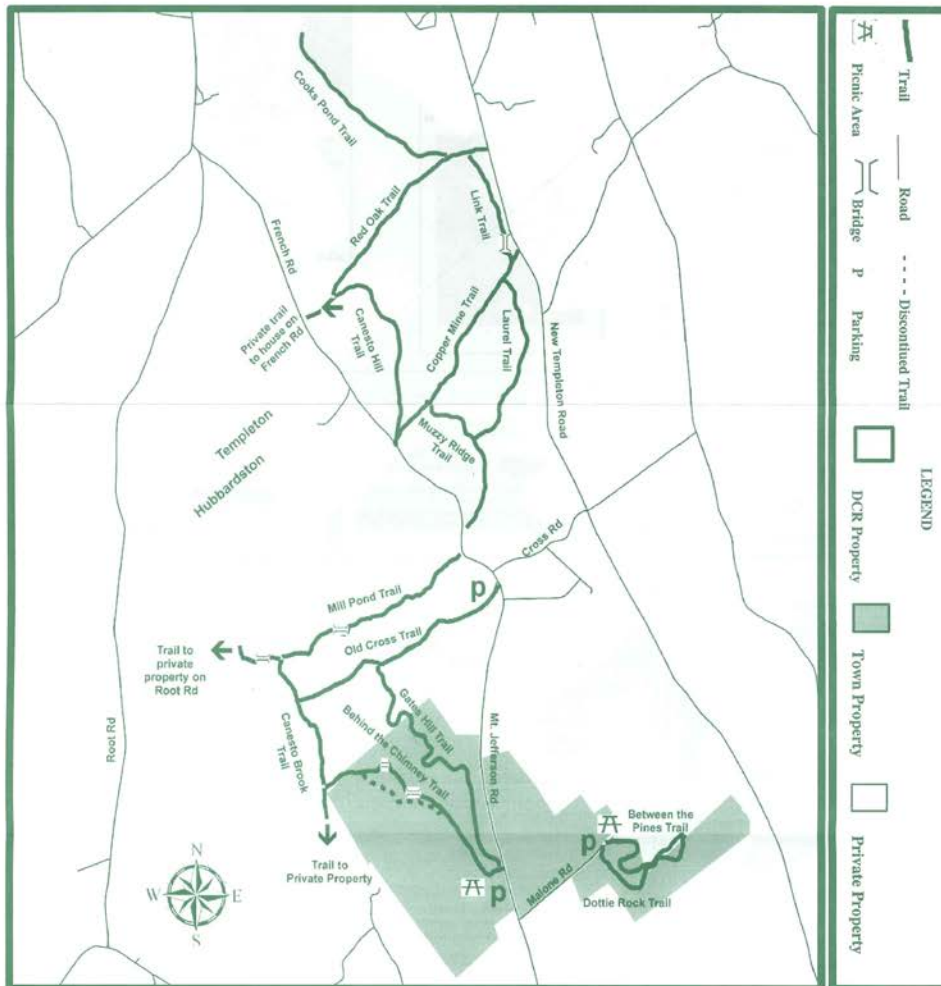
TRAIL MAP MT. JEFFERSON/MALONE ROAD CONSERVATION AREAS AND HUBBARDSTON/TEMPLETON STATE FOREST

TRAIL MAP

Trails open for hiking, cross country skiing, horseback riding, non-motorized mountain biking and hunting in season. ATV's and motorized bikes prohibited. Please respect private property.

Directions: From Hubbardston Center (Rt.68) turn onto Williamsville Road. Turn right onto Mt. Jefferson Road. Malone Road is 1st road on right. Mt. Jefferson parking is on left after Malone Road.

- Prepared by the Hubbardston Open Space Committee and funded by local businesses. Please give them your support!
- With appreciation to the boys and parents of Hubbardston Troop 12, Americorps, Baystate Trail Riders Assoc., DCR and Recreation Trails Grant for their valuable help in making this trail system



Trail Markings and Mileage Map Not to Scale

Behind the Chimney - blue triangles - 0.8 mls
 Old Cross Road - Green Circles - 0.8 mls
 Copper Mine - Blue Squares - 0.8 miles
 Link - Yellow Triangles - 0.4miles
 Dottie Rock - Double Blue Triangles - 0.5 miles

Gates Hill - yellow circles - 1ml
 Mill Pond - Yellow Squares - 0.8 mls
 Canesto Hill - Green Squares - 0.7 miles
 Laurel - Green Triangles - 0.6 miles
 Between the Pines - Double Red Triangles - 0.5 miles

Canesto Brook - Red circles - 0.5 mls
 Muzzy Ridge - Red Squares - 0.6 mls
 Red Oak - Red Triangles - 0.8 miles
 Cook Pond - Blue Circles - 0.7 miles

Brush cutter machine

~~Charles Willaims~~

Thu 1/21/2016 9:08 PM

To: Eck, Herm (DCR) <Herm.Eck@state.ma.us>;

DCR
Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee
January 21, 2016

To Whom it may concern;

We the Ware River Advisory Committee would like to make the following recommendation. After viewing work done in the Barre Falls Dam area we realized how important it is to clear back trees, brush and invasive plants and also to open up old fields. Knowing the amount of acreage that is in the Ware River Watershed and in Quabbin Watershed we feel that the one machine you have to use in all these places will be too restrictive. Having to do all this work in 3 to 5 months with a shared machine is very inefficient. Knowing the amount of work that needs to be done on these two Watersheds that a larger and multi use machine should be looked at and one that could be used in all seasons.

Looking at the future one could only hope to see well cared and managed lands that we all can take pride in for past performance and future growth.