



**City of Shelton
Trails Committee**
Meeting Minutes for
January 9, 2019

Present: Bill Dyer, Terry Gallagher, Mark Vollaro, Jim Taradine, Val Gosset, Bob Wood, Mike Flament. **Also present:** Teresa Gallagher (Natural Resource Manager), Elizabeth “Polly” Buckley (CFPA Paugussett Trail Manager).

The meeting was called to order by Bill Dyer at 5:35 pm.

1. **Meeting Minutes:** **Bob Wood made a motion to approve the December 5, 2018 meeting minutes. Seconded by Val Gosset. All were in favor.**
2. **Public Portion:** AJ Corcino from Troop 28 stated his interest in working on the Pearmain Path Loop, along with removal of invasive species at Nicholdale Farm. His sponsor will be the Shelton Land Trust. Bill Dyer said he hoped the trails portion of the project will be completed by April.



3. Recent Trail Activities:

- A. A work party was held to clear brush along the Rec Path at Great Ledge. Eleven volunteers participated (33.0 hrs)

- B. Mark Vollaro rerouted a section of Turkey Trot Tail to bypass a muddy section. (3.0)
- C. Mark Vollaro and Jose Melendez cleared the sides of the Rec Path for better gator access, cleared drainage channels, removed blowdown, and other tasks. (12.0)
- D. Mark Vollaro, Jim Taradine, and Jose Melendez cut in a new turnaround for the Gator at the top of Turkey Trot Trail, worked on TTT drainage at the powerlines, and cut in a gator turnaround under the powerlines off of Shelton Ave for the gator. (12.0)
- E. Terry Gallagher, Bill Dyer, Mark Vollaro, Jim Taradine, and Jose Melendez repaired washouts on the Rec Path near the Dog Park, dug a deeper drainage swale, and winterized the gator. (15.0)
- F. Mark Vollaro had a flat tire on the gator repaired. (3)
- G. Mark Vollaro, Polly Buckley, and Teresa Gallagher walked a potential reroute of the Paugussett between Mayflower and Rt 108 due to mud. (5)
- H. Polly Buckley worked on the Paugussett South section for 11 hours, and John Rek spent 3 hours on a blowdown at Indian Well (14 hrs total)
- I. Teresa Gallagher finished up a reroute of the Paugussett Trail at Indian Well near Hickory Hill Lane (9 hrs).
- J. Val Gosset handled the email list and announcements (1 hr)
- K. Terry Gallagher worked on clearing Gristmill Trail (2.5 hrs)
- L. Terry Gallagher worked on blog posts and a trail report to the Conservation Commission (4 hrs)
- M. **Total volunteer hours since the last meeting: 113.5** (*Hours do not include events or meetings*)

4. **Projects planned for the near future:**

- A. **2018 review and 2019 goals.** Terry Gallagher drafted a year-end report addressed to the Conservation Commission that summarized the 2018 efforts and outlined goals for 2019. Trails Committee members discussed and made changes. Total volunteer hours for 2018 were 1191, and twenty-three formal trail work parties were held. The modified report is attached.
- B. **Remove concrete footings from Hope Lake.** Mark Vollaro outlined a strategy for removing the old concrete footings from the shore of Hope Lake where a Scout bridge to the island failed a few years ago.
- C. **Trails lost and found.** Mike Flament suggested a Lost and Found system for the trails. Committee members discussed ways to have found items left at kiosks.

5. **Guided Hikes/Events**

- A. Marshmallow Sunday, March 3 at 1:00 pm. Nicholdale Farm
- B. Wildflower Hike. Saturday, April 20* or April 27 depending on blooms, 10:00 at Birchbank Mountain
- C. Trails Day. Saturday, June 1, 10:30 am. Raindate Sunday at 1:00 pm. Location TBA.

6. Potential Work Parties:

- A. Saturday, January 12 at 9:00 am the Trails Committee members will meet to walk the Pearmain property. This is not a public work party.

7. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Minutes were prepared by Teresa Gallagher and should be considered a draft until approved by the Trails Committee.

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Mr. Thomas Harbinson, Chairman
Shelton Conservation Commission
54 Hill St.
Shelton, Connecticut 06484

Re: 2018 Shelton Trails Committee Summary

Dear Chairman Harbinson & Conservation Commissioners,

Weather had a big impact on trails in Shelton during 2018. But it was a productive year in spite of the weather.

2018 High Lights:

- There was a total of **1,200 recorded volunteer hours** performed on Shelton's trails in 2018. This does not include time spent at meetings or events, or the efforts of anonymous volunteers. This effort is valued at \$36,288 based on Independent Sector's posted value of \$30.24/hour for Connecticut.
- Organized 23 formal trail work parties using volunteers (typically the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the Month),
- Led numerous smaller mini-work parties of 1-4 individuals,
- Assisted with construction of the new Stockmal Trail with the construction of a bridge,
- Supported the application for the CT DEEP Open Space Grant for the Pearmain Preserve that was awarded in December,
- Worked with the Shelton Parks and Recreation Department staff, and private contractors to repair storm damage and erosion along the Shelton Lakes Recreation Path,
- Led 6 public guided hikes, including the National Trails Day Hike, to promote Shelton's Open Spaces,
- Expanded the use of Trail Monitors to report trail conditions and problems on a regular basis to assist making work parties more effective,
- There are now over 28 miles of trails on 2,000 acres of Shelton Open Space and other conservation areas in Shelton that are maintained.

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Personnel Changes:

With great reluctance we accepted Sheri Dutkanicz's resignation from the Trails Committee in June due to various time commitments and the need see grandkids. Sheri was a great Trail Committee Member, and we look forward to seeing her on hikes when she has time. Fortunately we were also able to add Mark Vollaro as a new member of the Trails Committee in June. Mark has been a big help with trail maintenance and planning. Elizabeth "Polly" Buckley was appointed Trail Manager for the southern section of the Paugussett Trail in November by Connecticut Forest and Parks Association. Polly is an experienced CFPA trail manager and we look forward to working with her going forward.

The Year in Weather:

We started the year deep in a polar vortex that saw temperatures of -5 degrees F, a blizzard, then ice storms, then we went into a freakishly warm and clear spell in February that allowed us to build the Stockmal Bridge, then we had not one, not two, not three, but four; count 'em 4 Nor'easters in March with snow drifts, downed trees and power outages everywhere. Then a tornado whipped thru the State, fortunately Shelton was spared some of the damage that hit other towns. By the time we got done cleaning all the storm damage from the trails it go hot, and wet, which caused everything to leaf out and explode with a vengeance. So we were scrambling to cut everything along the RecPath and trails prior to various public hikes. Then we had a heat wave, and a dry spell in early summer, which then morphed into a really wet Fall. We've had notable floods in September and December, with a lot of wet weather in between. A number of our scheduled events were snowed, iced, or rained out. The yearly summary from WTNH Weather listed 2018 as being the 2nd Wettest Year in Bridgeport's recorded history with over 60" of precipitation.

Public Outreach:

The Trails Committee continues to try to find ways to make the City's open spaces available to Shelton's residents and visitors:

- Held 11 Shelton Trails Committee public meetings (February was canceled due to City Hall being closed in an ice storm), Teresa Gallagher has done a very good job getting the minutes of the meetings distributed promptly (usually the next day) every month.
- Led 6 public guided hikes, including the National Trails Day Hike, to promote Shelton's Open Spaces,

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- Dozens of Shelton High School students were able to get their community service time working on trail parties; some of which were organized by Teresa Gallagher to help the students participate during the spring,
- Created 46 blog posts on the Shelton Trails Blog documenting progress,
- Supported the Conservation Commissions Facebook Page,
- The Shelton Herald posted a number of notices about upcoming events and hikes,
- We added a number of names to our e-mail listing of events, which are sent out by Trail Committee Member Val Gosset multiple times per month,

Other Activities:

- Bill Dyer and others worked with the Shelton Parks and Recreation Department staff, and private contractors to repair storm damage and erosion along the Shelton Lakes Recreation Path.
- New trail signs were added along the Basil Brook Bypass, Nicholdale, Stockmal Trail, Willis Woods, and sections of the Paugussett Trail to help visitors locate the trailheads easier.
- Supported Shelton's Open Space Grant Application for the Pearmain Preserve on Pearmain Road, which was awarded by the State in December for \$187,500. Thanks to Mayor Lauretti, the Conservation Commission, and Teresa Gallagher; Natural Resource Manager, and the various property owners, for their perseverance in securing this funding for Shelton.
- Thoreau Drive improvements to the Paugussett Trail for trail users and to prevent homeowner encroachment problems.
- We worked to preserve a rare native American Chestnut that is along the Recreation Path at Lane Street from being damaged during reconstruction of the Lane Street Bridge.

2018 Scout Projects:

Josh Andres RecPath Benches Constructed or updated and then installed 3 benches along the Recreation Path. We'd like to thank Alderman Anthony Simmonetti for donating some of the benches.

Other 2018 Trail Projects by Others:

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Stockmal & Willis Woods Trail construction by Teresa Gallagher to make sure that Shelton was complying with earlier grant requirements while we were applying for the Pearmain Preserve Grant.

Paugussett Trail improvements by Teresa and Terry Gallagher. There were multiple minor and large relocations and upgrades of the trail in 2018.

Meadow Street Brick Crosswalk for the RecPath by Highways and Bridges. We'd also like to thank Alderman Eric McPherson for promoting that safety improvement project.

The Highways and Bridges Department filled in potholes and repaired a number of trailhead parking lots using road millings.

2019 Trails Goals

- Pearmain Path relocation and begin The Big Loop in the White Hills and Monroe (Pootatuck? Loop – final name still to be determined)
- Construct an engineered bridge across Means Brook on the Stockmal Trail – working with Aquarion Water Company in part of Centennial Forest.
- Extend the Paugussett Trail southward. This assumes that there are some significant reductions or revisions to the Shelter Ridge in the future.
- Fix up all the trailhead kiosks and landscape the trailheads.
- Request that the Mayor & Board of Aldermen take steps to fix the gate house & other structures at the dam on Pine Lake at the main entrance to the Shelton Lakes Recreation Path.
- Thank trail friendly businesses and individuals that helped us in 2018.
- Install additional trail signs at selected locations for improved wayfinding.
- Secure a contractor or Parks & Rec to provide more routine maintenance (mowing\fence replacements\etc.) along the RecPath
- Fix up The Red Barn
- New tools; get a second brushcutter, possibly a DR walk behind mower,
- Order more hats and tee shirts for volunteers. Host 1 or 2 fun events during the year like a pizza party or picnic for volunteers.

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- Promote and expand the Trail Monitor program.
- Print new trails brochures and maps.
- Add a pedestrian bridge on the Paugussett South between Independence Drive and Wellington Court, and improve the tread though the Wiacek Open Space.

Sidewalk Improvements & Bridge Construction Projects

Lane St Bridge construction starts in April – make sure that RecPath Impacts & Pedestrian\Bicyclist safety concerns are addressed during construction.

Indian Well Bridge construction also starts this spring. Make sure that guide rail addresses pedestrian safety concerns on the Paugussett Trail at Indian Well Road.

Follow up on plans to connect the trails at Riverview Park with future Riverwalk Extensions. Coordination with a downtown sidewalk connecting to Pine Lake on along Rt. 108. Work to connect Shelton's greenways with other major projects like the Naugatuck Greenway & Bridge St. improvements in 2019.

Installing a Crosswalk on Rt. 108 at Huntington Center Fire House. This will allow residents to park and the Community Center and safely walk across the street to the Lane St. entrance of the Recreation Path.

Construct a sidewalk on the north side of Lane St. between the Means Brook Bridge and the RecPath entrance.

Construct a sidewalk on the east side of Rt. 108 from 90 Huntington St. to Beechwood Market. This would greatly improve pedestrian safety in this busy street in Huntington Center.

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In Summary, 2018 was another very active year for Shelton's Open Space and Greenways. We hope that 2019 is just as good a year for Shelton Trails.

Yours truly,
The Shelton Trails Committee

Bill Dyer – Chairman
Bob Wood, Mike Flament, Terry Gallagher, Val Gosset, Jim Taradine, and Mark Vollaro.