

2022 Trail Update

by Andrew Czwakiel, Stewardship Coordinator

This past fall we have been upgrading a handful of our trails adding both rock and wooded steps as well as stretches of bog bridging to help our trails withstand increased usage from hikers, create more sustainable grades, and limit erosion within wet and mucky areas. Many of you may have noticed, if you've hiked over at Peter's Brook recently, that we have a new trail named the Albion Connector Trail. This summer it was a host site for a professional trail building workshop. During the workshop we learned a lot about trail sustainability, techniques, and user experience. Now building these steps was no easy task! We scoured the hillsides for sizable boulders that we could use as steps, rolled those into place, and hauled in cedar and hemlock for the rest of our steps. What we didn't finish in our two-day workshop, Sandy and I completed over the following weeks. Today you can see the finished product that will provide a more sustainable grade to minimize future erosion on the hillside.



This past year I also worked on laying down and building over 450 feet of bog bridging along the Three Bridges Trail before the overview. With the increased use during the Pandemic, this section became a really, really wet and muddy section of trail. There was no easy way to get all these cedar planks up to our work spot except to carry them up by hand one at a time. So we carried around 100 cedar planks uphill for a quarter mile. As our volunteers, summer interns, and I can attest, it was a hard quarter mile. Over several months we were able to lug all the wood up the trail where I could build and lay down enough bog bridging to keep hikers high and dry through this muddy section. This new addition to the trail will greatly help minimize erosion as well as provide everyone with a much nicer hike along the trail.

There has been a lot of interest in the Wallamatogus property this fall, where we have started building a hiking trail to access the property. This trail is currently not open yet, but we expect to have the trail done and ready to be used by late Spring 2023, and I assure you we'll let everyone know when it's open. George, Sandy, and I have worked a lot so far on laying out, clearing, and building a nice sustainable trail up the fairly steep hillside, which includes a nicely benched trail surface with multiple series of stone steps





winding up the hillside. We held multiple volunteer days here this past Fall where many people came out to help build the new trail. As I know they can all attest, we have been putting a lot of great work into this so far with more to come in the spring.

Over the past few years, we've embarked in upgrading our trails to be more accessible for those with mobility issues, whether it be a walker or a stroller, our goal is for everyone to be able to enjoy the outdoors. Our latest and greatest accessible trail at our Cooper Farm / Caterpillar Hill property and has been underway since mid-September. The trail itself is complete and is about 1300 linear feet of hardpacked gravel, with grades between 5 and 8%, pull-off areas for resting, picnic areas for viewing (tables to come this Spring), a larger parking area with dedicated accessible parking, and other key finishing touches like signage to come this spring as well. There will be an official trail opening in May or June, and we will be sure to let everyone know.



All of these projects wouldn't have been possible this summer and fall without the help from all our amazing volunteers and awesome summer intern crew. I'm going to continue our volunteer days next year and as we look forward to Spring 2023, we have a lot of trail restoration projects we'd like to accomplish, as well as projects we'd like to finish, and some great trails we'd like to add. Please feel free to reach out and email me anytime at **stewardship@bluehillheritagetrust.org** if you're interested in helping with our outdoor projects