

## Northborough Trails Committee

### ***2007 Annual Report***

The Northborough Trails Committee's (NTC) formal name is the Trails Subcommittee of the Northborough Open Space Committee. Arthur Cole founded the Trails Committee in February of 2001 under the auspice of the Open Space Committee. The Trails Committee's goal is to develop and maintain a viable recreational trail system in Northborough on public and private property by utilizing volunteers from the community. During the 2007 calendar year we had a busy year with our administration, trails development, and stewardship of existing trails. Some highlights of our years activities are described below. The NTC encourages everyone to enjoy the Town's resources and to participate in NTC activities. A new addition to the NTC during 2007 is a Letter Boxing activity Blog Spot designed by Sherral Devine. Checkout the NTC website for other information about the Northborough trails network at: <http://www.town.northborough.ma.us/ntrails/index.htm> and the Letter Boxing Blog at <http://northboroletterboxing.blogspot.com/>

The NTC acts as the Trail Steward for the Northborough Conservation land on Mt. Pisgah. The Mt. Pisgah area has had an increase in recreational users over the last few years due to word of mouth and news publications about this seemingly remote and beautiful land that makes up the Mt. Pisgah Corridor. One visitor recently commented to me that as she walked the South Gore Trail she felt like she was on a New Hampshire mountain, but she was only ten minutes from home. Due to the increased use of the land the NTC will continue to monitor the trails for needed maintenance and improvements, but feel free to contact us about any concerns or suggestions. The Mt. Pisgah North View is located in Berlin on private property and over the last several years the view to Boston has become overgrown with trees. In December 2007 the NTC was granted permission by the property owner to cut trees in order to restore the view. That work began during the first week of January 2008, and we hope to have the view fully restored by spring. The Mt. Pisgah South View is in Northborough, and also on private property. The South View has also become overgrown with trees during the last several years and we are attempting to gain permission from the property owner to restore that view too. The Town of Berlin has a Trailhead to Mt. Pisgah on Linden Street (via the Devine Trail) and during August 2007 the Town of Berlin created an official trail head parking lot at the Devine Trail. The NTC is grateful for this new trailhead parking lot because the Smith Road access has been handling most of the visitor traffic, and we're hopeful this new parking area will help disperse visitor traffic.

The NTC also acts as Trail Steward for the Little Chauncy/Cedar Hill/Crane Swamp recreational area, which is land owned by MassWildLife, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), and Sudbury Valley Trustees, so we co-steward that trail system with SVT and the Westborough Land Trust, who operates the Charm Bracelet Trail system in Westborough. In July 2007 Eagle Scout Miles Ferguson with the Northborough Boy Scout Troop 1 completed a relocation of a portion of the Talbot Trail for his Eagle Scout Project. The new trail, which is about 3/10's of a mile long, bypasses a wetland area and now follows the high ground through a tall pine forest reconnecting back onto the original Talbot Trail on the other side of the wetland. Miles and the other Scouts working with him had to cut underbrush and tree limbs to create the trail, and install about 100' of boardwalks. Thank you to Miles and the other Scouts for a job well done!

In April 2006 the NTC began development for an extension of the Coyote Trail at the Yellick Conservation Area. The new trail will begin at the current Coyote Trail's dead end on the south side of the Assabet River, and then travel through Department of Conservation and Recreation SuAsCo property southeast to the Stirrup Brook, then after crossing the Stirrup Brook the trail will follow the Stirrup Brook down stream and out to Boundary Street. We hope to complete the trail by returning to the Yellick Conservation Area on the sewer line from Boundary Street then onto Hudson Street. The complete loop would be approximately 3 miles long. In 2006 we obtained Conservation Commission approval for the areas the new trail travels through wetlands, and then in December 2007 we obtained the final permit from the Department of Conservation and Recreation for development of the Coyote Trail extension. Two Eagle Scout Candidates, Ethan Langer and Daniel Rowe, will be working with the NTC to complete the trail and work on the trail began in late December 2007. We hope to have the trail completed to Boundary Street by late spring 2008.

In December 2006 the NTC received authority from the Algonquin Regional School Committee to develop trails on the woodland behind the high school. Our intent is to complete a trail connecting Rt-20 near the old rest area to Bartlett Street near Cedar Hill Road. This plan has the possibility of connecting the Cedar Hill/Crane Swamp area to our proposed Coyote/Stirrup Brook Trail on the north side of Rt-20. This trail is still in the development phase, and we hope to gain all necessary approvals and begin development after completion of the Coyote Trail extension.

***NTC Funding*** – We are a volunteer committee without a Town budget, but we need funding to purchase materials for trails development and maintenance, as well as for needed equipment to develop and maintain the trails. In 2007 we received \$2,000.00 through the Community Preservation Act, and we would like to thank the Town residents for voting in favor of our request at the annual Town Meeting. We used \$1,430.00 of the CPA money, along with a portion of the 2006 cash donation by Resident Tim Shay, to purchase to purchase a Brush Hog mower, which is used to develop and maintain the trail system throughout the Town. We also received CPA funding in the amount of \$570.00 to expand the Edmund Woods Historic Interpretive Trail Guide by purchasing MP3 Players. Audio guide information will be installed on the devices, which can be played as you walk the trail and arrive at each numbered interpretive post. The MP3 Players will be at the Northborough Library and borrowed by using a valid Library Card, or the audio information can be downloaded to your own MP3/iPod type device using a link we are in the process of setting up on our Website. The NTC has applied again this year to the Community Preservation Committee for funding to purchase supplies to develop new trails, and we hope the Town Residents will again support our request. The NTC would also like to thank Town resident Michael Durkin for a generous cash donation during 2007.

The NTC meets the third Monday of each month at the Police Station and volunteers are always welcome. Don't forget to check out the NTC website and either download the trail maps or stop by the Planning Department for a map packet. Enjoy your Town's natural resources and get outside and take a hike!

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Bradley & Marielle Stone, Co-Chairs