

Minutes

Norwich Trails Committee

7 pm, December 3, 2025

Norwich Historical Society

Attendees

George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Byron Haynes, Bob Fiskens, Nick Krembs, Brian Kunz, Gerry Plummer, Aaron Sheldon

Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved.

Comments from those present

A Recreation Department presentation to the Selectboard indicated a plan to purchase a groomer. Some discussion was had around past grooming on Parcel 5.

Updates from the UVTA

No representative was present.

Updates from the Conservation Commission

No representative was present.

Reports on recent trail blockages and actions taken or planned

Numerous downed trees reported (Doug addressed several near where he lives). The AT also had many problems.

Trail projects for 2025

Gile drainage work day recap from November 16

5–6 volunteers cleared leaves and debris from steps. Lighter workload than prior years, likely due to dry conditions. Finished by 10:30.

Trail projects for 2026

Ballard Trail stone steps

Town Manager said it does not need to be on the Conservation Commission budget. Women's Club grant for Ballard Trail stone steps has been drafted and the plan is to bring it to the Selectboard after budget season, likely in February.

Ballard crossings

5–6 crossings require improvement as banks have washed out or stones shifted. Plan for a workday using cables, iron bars, and pickaxes. There was also discussion of improvements to the ground ladder to improve footing and reliability.

Will select priority sites in spring.

Gile fire tower tread coating

Prefer spraying with a two-gallon hand pump for better penetration, including gaps near metal angles. Two-person team (one holding tank, one spraying).

Flood Clear and Thompson's WaterSeal have been used; coatings weather quickly, ideally reapplied annually. As a reference, Burke tower received multiple coats before tread installation.

Timing will be weather-dependent; needs at least a week (preferably two) of dry conditions. Aim for before or after Dartmouth graduation week in June; a warm, not-wet May could work. Plan signage and closures and keep messaging proportionate to duration/impact.

Milt Frye Bridge

Sean Ogle from UVTA replaced several damaged planks on the bridge behind St. Barnabas. Full bridge replacement is anticipated.

Public school students (early grades) regularly use the bridge for crossing via the school garden area.

Bridge is on church property, not within the Milt Fry Nature Area. The church paid for the previous replacement; volunteers have done various repairs over the years. Unclear whether Trails Alliance/church will handle budgeting, layout, and design; group will ask Sean for clarity given Trails Alliance's recurring funds.

Schmidt Bog trail network

Craig will speak with nearby landowners about potential options. New signage has been up for over a month; no feedback reported. Plan to check with neighbors for any concerns.

Website updates

No updates.