

## **TRAIL CUTTING IN THE FOREST ABOVE THE HUNTING SWAMP – 8/5/2019**

On Monday morning, August 5th, Bob Lyon arrived around 8:15 am at the entrance to the Hunting Swamp and was joined around 8:30 by Selectman Stanley Prescott, Sandy Blanchard, Deb Eastman-Proulx, Denis Proulx and Nancy Huckins for the trail cutters' weekly morning work session on the trail system there. Martha Butterfield had an appointment that morning and wasn't able to be there until much later. As she entered the Hunting Swamp around 10:45, she eventually arrived at the section of the trail where work had left off the previous week and saw that the trail from there forward had already been cleared along the 'lower forest trail' and up through the woods to the higher ground of what might be called the 'upper forest trail'. Finally, she caught up with some of the group sometime after 11:00 am while they were still working on a new section of what might be called a continuation of the 'upper forest trail' that runs along a stone wall.

Sandy and Nancy were handily cutting the undergrowth with their loppers, while Deb used her sawzall with great efficiency to cut off branches along the way. As had been their custom, the women had followed behind Bob and Denis as the two swiftly moved on their way along the trail, chain sawing logs and removing small trees that were in the way. Just as the men worked well as a team chain sawing, the women formed an efficient team that worked equally as hard, dragging the cut up pieces neatly out of the way, removing protruding branches, cutting stubborn brush and making the trail as hazard-free as possible.

Martha had brought along her own loppers and was delighted that Nancy had come out that day as part of the team, having made up for her absence. Martha chatted briefly with Sandy who filled her in on what had taken place before she arrived, as it was Martha's job to keep track of the hours the volunteers worked each session, and she also prepared a weekly report detailing the group's progress. Once she caught up with what the group had accomplished, she quickly joined the others as they continued to clear the trail.

The group appreciated that Stan had taken the time to join the trail cutters that day, helping out and also giving them valuable information about the boundaries around the Town's property. He complimented them on their work and also assisted Deb as she was pulling out and sawing the roots of a small tree that obstructed the trail as it crossed through an opening in the stone wall, headed west a short way and joined with the 'upper farm trail' further up the hill.

Sometime earlier, when Bob and Denis had arrived at the remains of the old farm trail, they remembered seeing that earlier in the spring the lower portion was subject to

wetness. And, as that area was too far in to add bog-bridging, they determined that the trail would need to be rerouted to the left on the other side of the stone wall to the east that roughly paralleled that trail as it headed up the hill. Extra time needed to be spent that morning, as they scouted out the alternative route, and the orange marker ribbons also had to be moved to the new trail.

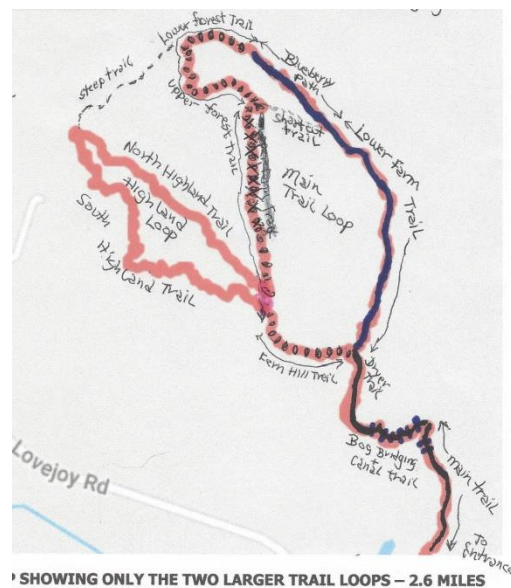
Over a period of three and a half hours, the group had managed to complete the clearing of the entire length of the 'main trail loop', having ended at the bottom of the 'fern hill trail' where it intersected with the 'dryer trail' and the 'lower farm trail'. All that remained for work on the 'main trail loop' was another pass through, clearing away more branches, stumps, rotted wood and small brush obstructing easy walking.

The 'highland loop' to the west of the 'main trail loop' is yet to be cleared, but that section is a much smaller one and may possibly be cleared in one session. When the two loops are added together, the length is about 2.6 miles. Another short section that would serve as a shortcut between the 'lower forest trail' and the 'highland loop' is what might be called the 'steep trail' because it resembles a bit of mountain climbing and shouldn't be too difficult to clear

The map on the right shows the section of the 'main trail loop' that was completed on August 5<sup>th</sup>. It also shows an existing 'shortcut' logging trail that was mostly cleared a long time ago.

Work ended at noontime.

Because Martha wasn't there long enough the previous day, she didn't have time to take photos of the group at work. But on Tuesday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, she walked along the recently cleared trail and took the following images showing the improved conditions along the remainder of the 'main trail loop'.



Martha Butterfield 8/6/19