Existing Trail Review and Redesign

Key Attribute #: 3, 6, 7

Need #: 2, 3, 7

Estimated Cost: $$$

Timing: Short-Term

Many of the trails in the Virginia Stranahan Memorial Town Forest are former logging roads. These logging roads were not constructed according to today's best practices around sustainable trail construction. Some of these trails have drainage issues, particularly Thompson Road, the main route through the forest. Portions of the road are frequently muddy and wet, creating an unpleasant experience for the trail user and leading them to frequently walk off trail and damage surrounding soils. The trail assessment form, included in the town forest recreation planning toolkit, provides a tool for the committee and other volunteers to use to review trail conditions in the forest and record areas in need of mitigation.

Based on the results of the existing trail review, the committee should reroute, redesign, or replace trails to enhance experiences for all user groups, improve drainage, and limit erosion. Some trails will require maintenance and small repairs to improve drainage; for others, such as Thompson Road, decommissioning portions of the existing trail and re-routing will likely be necessary. During this process, the trail needs of each user group should be evaluated to plan for the forest's trail system.

The rehabilitated trail system must provide the desired experience for all user groups. It should have a mix of traditional walking footpaths, natural surface multi-use trails, ADA accessible paths, and "bike optimized" trails open to all users. Strategic connecting trails are also vital for enhancing the user experience and limiting trail density.

Responsibility
Forest Stewardship Committee

Partners Involved
Conservation Commission, RIPM, local builder/users

Planning Required
Trail reroute & redesign

Funding Opportunities
RTP, RTC, VHCP, ERG

Toolkit Resources

Trail Assessment Forms

Natural Resource Guidance Toolkit

Sustainable Trail Standards