

## **2011 Greenbelt Trail Work Summary**

### **Great Pond Trail**

Total time spent clearing: 5hrs, 1 day. Both trail entrances were overgrown although more on the Rt. 77 end. The middle section closer to Fenway Rd. was in rather good shape. Some small debris removal necessary. I spent approximately 3 hours weed whacking all the overgrown grass and vines at the trailheads, and along the boardwalks to as far as could reach off either end. I also trimmed some cattails to provide a view of the pond and also around the informational signage. The remaining 2 hours were spent sheering bushes and removing any reasonable branches that were in the walking area of the trail. I also completed the same through to the Vernon Rd. entrance. Had assistance from public works staff removing a large tree that had fallen across the trail. 2 men for an unknown period of time. Maintenance on this trail should be at done once every 2 months for one day consisting of weed whacking and minor trimming.

### **Whaleback Way**

Total time spent clearing: 13hrs, 1.5 days. The overall trail was in rough shape both entrances were overgrown. Rt. 77 with grass and Whaleback Way with prickler bushes and Lg. sapling growth. The inner trail was covered in vines, broken limbs and downed trees. The entire trail was weed wacked through end to end. Both trailheads were cleared and made as visible as possible based on location. All vines and hanging limbs were removed, bushes on either side of the trail were trimmed back to give a comfortable feel when walking through. All broken limbs were removed and also had assistance from public works staff removing several downed trees. 2 men approximately 1.5 hours. General maintenance should be done on this trail at least once a month for one half a day, consisting of mostly weed whacking and minor trimming of bushes.

## **Winnick Woods**

Total time spent clearing: 16 hours, 2 days. The trail was overgrown throughout. Both parking lots were in a sad overgrown state. The grass stood to be at least 2 feet tall. The wooded trail had an abundance of broken limbs throughout. Sub-inner trails were overgrown with prickly bushes and broken and downed trees left branches protruding onto the walking space and the walkway at the main entrance had mild washout damage. The main parking lot was weed wacked from Sawyer Rd. around the signage and back to the shelter and all around the well. All grass in and throughout the trail was weed wacked as well. Washout was filled with material and back dragged smooth. I cut back tree limbs and removed broken branches, located sub trails trimmed back all bushes and limbs. Cleared around all bridges. Thinned out the tree growth in the smaller parking lot, also removing larger limbs from other trees closer to the road. It seemed a hazard of visibility neither oncoming traffic could see each other approaching. Cleared around log walk approximately 4 to 5 feet on either side. Mowed the main trail through the field while filling some low spots in the dirt trail with material on hand. Walked trail several times to ensure safety and accessibility. General maintenance should be done least once a month for no more than a day and a half.

## **Leighton Farms**

Total time spent clearing: 8hrs, 1 day. Initially the gravel trail was in rather good shape, tall grass and some bushes that haven't been trimmed in a while. Didn't actually find the main trail until the third time I had mowed. Downed trees, stumps, and overgrown branches and large bushes protruded into the trails on both sides of the gravel walk way. It was possible to get the tractor in on the power lines side of the trail so I used the brush hog to rough cut the path wider until I got to the trees. Removed one tree to make it possible to get to the power lines section of the. Adjusted the landscape to fit the turning tractor onto the power lines. Mowed and weed wacked the gravel pathway. Weed wacked any tall grass in the wooded trail both sides. Trimmed the smaller wooded section back from overgrowth to a

comfortable distance. Removed overturned stump using the tractor could not get an answer on the property abutting the trail so I stopped work just short on either side of the property. Cut hanging tree limbs that opened the trail at the Cross Hill Rd. entrance. Sheered and finished cut the bushes to a comfortable walking width through to the wooded section approaching the power lines. Repeated mowing and whacking several times on the gravel trail several times through the summer. I had only been to the wooded section once. Replaced GBT signage on the wooded trailheads so that it would be easier for someone who had not been there before could find it. General maintenance can be done at a minimal on this trail. The main concern would be the mowing of the gravel trail, but I would say once a month for a half a day.

### **Town Center/Elizabeth Park**

Total time spent clearing: 8hrs, 1 day. The trail was in fair condition for the first time working on it. The bushes along the side had grown into the trail a couple feet at the high school entrance down past the houses to where the tall marsh grass begins. Beginning at the Starboard Drive entrance the bushes had overgrown long enough to deviate the trail around it. The wooded section that leads to the bridge was not in bad shape though the running trail seemed rather narrow and sticky with small branches hanging. I first began by sheering all the bushes throughout the whole trail looking to re-establish its original width. Removed low hanging branches near the high school entrance and through the running trail that leads to the bridge that crosses the marsh. Bush hogged the main trail end to end ensuring a good width and weed wacked the wooded trail, around the posts at the end of the trail, the entryway to the bridge, and any low lying area the mower couldn't get or reach. The trail was maintained bi-weekly with mowing and whacking being done. Approximately 2 hour's maximum spread throughout the week. (Mowing one day and weed whacking on another) General maintenance can and should be done at least once a month

combined with the Scott Dyer trail for one full day with caution to be taken on the Scott Dyer trail due to softness of the ground.

### **Scott Dyer Road**

Total time spent clearing: 16hrs, 2 days. The trail seemed merely inexistent. Large downed trees block 2 entrances, while large vines and downed limbs obstruct the bridge at the Scott Dyer Rd. entrance. The inner trail consisted of 3-foot tall marsh grass downed trees and very overgrown bushes that spanned  $\frac{3}{4}$  the trail width. I began by mowing from the sewer line making the approximate trail width of 8 feet. Weed wacked the tall side grass along the sides of the trail so it doesn't snap and fall into the trail later. Hand sawed and removed low-lying branches on the overhanging trees. I also hand sawed removing the vines and broken and hanging limbs that blocked the bridge. The over grown bushes were sheered back and all curves were made wide enough for the tractor to fit through. 2 large rocks were placed on the sewer trail entrance to signify the trailhead. After the main clearing the Scott Dyer trail was maintained weekly with, mowing and minor weed whacking, taking approximately 1.5 hours to compensate and control growth. General maintenance can and should be done at least once a month for a full day combined with the town center trail, with caution to be taken on the Scott Dyer trail due to softness of the ground.

### **Spurwink Marsh Trail**

Total time spent clearing: 24hrs, 3 days. The Spurwink field had been kept up with routine mowing though the trail was lost as it headed into the woods moving towards the Spurwink cemetery. I was told it was rough cut over a year ago but had quickly grown back in. Nothing was accessible by the tractor due to tree growth and narrow trailheads, also a remaining rock wall made the trail in accessible when entering the trail from the marsh field. Years of overgrowth lack of signage and deer trails made it very hard to connect and or locate proper trail paths.

The trail heads were located by the Parks dept. Foreman and myself and a town rented a small walk behind brush hog for the first time which really made the job of connecting both ends of the 100% easier. With 4 hours assistance from a summer employee the main trail was through woods was rough cut in. this consisted of making several pass with the small brush hog and sheering bushes back over 2 feet on each side of the trail. Over 50% of the trail needed major sheering and cutbacks. A large section of unmarked headstones were located and marked with orange tape. Many headstones were directly in the middle of the path and had been walked on many times. The town planner was consulted and the trail was slightly deviated around the stones. I used narrow fallen trees to guide people and create boundaries around the cemetery. The removal of 5 trees was necessary in order to fit the tractor through the southern entrance of the trail. Assistance from public works staff was necessary to remove said trees. 2 men for 4 hours and the trees were removed. 2 loader buckets of crushed gravel were delivered in order to raise the ground level so the tractor could access the southern trail entrance piling and back dragging smooth over the dilapidated rock wall. (This process stands incomplete at this time)

The Spurwink Avenue entrance was improved to show the presence of a trail system. Saplings and root systems were removed, clean fill was brought in to fill low levels and smooth out any inconsistencies in the ground for the first 25- 30 feet of the trail. Large rocks and long fallen trees were used to line the boundaries of the head of the trail while bark mulch was used to fill between the boundaries adding to the presentation of the trail. Minor weed whacking was done throughout the trail to ensure a comfortable walking area and the larger field was mowed around it's perimeter and a narrower trail was cut in the field to give people access and ability to reach the wooded section of the trail. The large marsh field was routinely mowed every third week taking approximately 2.5 hours to complete. General maintenance should be approximately one-half a day when the width of the tractor can be accommodated at the southern entrance of the wooded trail.

### **Stonegate / Loveitt Woods**

Total time spent clearing 27hrs, 3.25 days. This trail was in a major overgrown condition. Tall grass covered the walking area up to 60% of the trail bent and broken trees hovered over the main trail and downed trees and debris littered some of the sub trails. All boardwalks were overgrown with 3-foot tall grass. 2 of 4 entrances were totally closed off due to vines limbs and growth. Lack of signage and deer paths led me the wrong direction multiple times. Loveitt Woods remains untouched to this date.

Half the time spent improving on this trail was spent weed whacking. All tall grass was wacked inside the trail due to the tractors inability to access the trail. All 4 entrances were cleared out allowing people to see the trailheads and markers. All boardwalk and bridge areas were wacked and cleared up to 3 feet off each side; tree limbs and debris were removed throughout the entire trail to provide a comfortable walking space. Hand sawing and the power pole saw were used to remove hanging and broken branches that were hanging overhead. Smaller trees were neatly pruned to clear branches off the trail and ensure continued growth and healthy trees. I traversed the trail several times making sure that it was safe to travel and that nothing protruded from its side boundaries. Trail extensions to Little John Rd. were not clearly marked and a trailhead abutting property was closed. Trailheads were kept open with periodic maintenance when seen necessary. As I mentioned I had never set foot on the Loveitt woods trail and only had completed the stone gate trail. This trails maintenance will take longer than normal because the tractor cannot access the trail at all. I would estimate a day and a half tops based on the length of the trail and the amount of grass on the trail and boardwalks.

### **Cross Hill Network**

Total time spent clearing: 68hours, 3 weeks and a half day. The Cross Hill system was in complete disarray. Trails were present yet 85% overgrown, many sections of the trail were impassable due to what seemed like years of overgrowth.

The trail system is so vast that it had to be done in sections. Nearly all the trail heads were choked off with vines small trees, saplings, and weeds. All board walks were overtaken by bushes and marsh grass. Nearly all the power lines paths were overgrown some areas impassable. A stream had over taken part of the trail leaving a muddy sinking mess. Downed trees and fallen limbs littered the ground in some sections, as prickly bushes blocked other areas. Lack of GBT signage made it very hard to find my way around and in some cases also due to lack of signage I had to stop moving forward though the trail continued on. Trees left unpruned along the roadside hid many entrances into the trail system.

Cross Hill presented many challenges because it couldn't be accessed by the tractor until the final week of the season. 90% of the entire trail system was weed wacked from the entrances on Wells Rd. to the power lines through to Winnock woods and Leighton farms. All trail heads were cleared and open, trees were pruned to allow better visibility of trails, and new GBT signs were replaced on the empty sign posts. Any and all fallen debris was removed from the trail, as fallen trees were skinny enough to be hand sawed and removed allowing for almost no deviation on the main trails. Each section was sheered and wacked to ensure a comfortable walking running and riding width of feet or more in some places. All boardwalks were cleared 3 feet over either side of tall grass bushes and fallen tree matter. All found broken and low level branches were removed to ensure safety. Some local larger yet small rocks were located and used to aid in passing of the overflowing stream. A small power line section that cut through Cross Hill Rd. was reopened using the brush hog yet wet areas did not allow for safe passing, those areas were sheered and weed wacked. Weed whacking around all sign posts was necessary and completed. By the end of summer the Cross Hill trail was completed and required minor maintenance around trail heads and board walks. Taking approximately 3 hours on an as needed basis, or 1.5 full days once a month to handle the major areas.

## **Broad Cove Highlands/Two Lights Trails**

Total time spent clearing: 27hrs, 3.25 days. At first look this trail needed help. The Two Lights Rd. entrances were horribly overgrown. The first with large saplings tall grass and an abundance of large pricker bushes. Vines choked trees and brought down limbs making this the hardest entrance to clear. The second entrance consisted of largely overgrown and fall grass and bushes, also some fallen tree debris had been scattered around the entrance to the woods. The other two entrances near Broad Cove were mildly clear. Many trees had either bent or fallen over leaving sticks and broken branches about. Bushes easily grew 2+ feet into the main pathway. Boardwalks were narrow with large bushes, tall marsh grass with cat tails, and Lg. sapling growth surrounding and protruding onto the trail. Many large bushes caused bottlenecks deep in the trail, while again bent and downed trees left broken branches scattered throughout.

I started by walking the trail finding all the bushes and sheering them back, which is nearly everything from Broad Cove to the second Two Lights entrance. Once the trail was widened I proceeded to traverse the trail with a weed whacker hitting the tall grass starting at the point where the tractor could no longer go. The inner trail was 100% weed wacked to include the areas around the 2 big ponds, main trail, and the board walks. The boardwalks and bridges were cleared back approximately 3 feet off both sides. The second Two Lights entrance was weed wacked down because the tractor could not get over the wooden walks. Bushes were sheered back to the grass line keep the trail the same width across. Broad Cove entrances were then bush hogged to cut the grass and chop up any the remaining sheered bushes. As well as the driveway side of the second 2 lights entrance. Finally I started in all removal of hanging branches, vines and bent trees using my hand saw. Some smaller narrower trees were removed that had the potential to cause future problems along with anything that was dead and within reason of the trail.



This vegetation growth on this trail was rather rapid and it being one of the more popular trails called for its maintenance to be on a monthly schedule, taking 2 days to repeat the process since its first service.

### **Gull Crest Trails**

Total time spent clearing: 40hrs, 5 days. Gull Crest is a wide trail that had overgrown quite a bit. In some areas of the trails bushes narrowed the width from 6+ feet to 2 feet. The grass inside the trail was standing at about a foot tall. Some mud holes and washouts by culverts were present. Tree branches were reaching into and across the trail in some places. Trash had blown in from the dump. (Trash bags and other random plastics) The Fowler Rd. Connector entrance had overgrown and the boardwalk was almost hidden by Lg. bushes and marsh grass with cat tails. Further down the trail leads to the worst section. Seeming to be a low level wet land with 3 foot tall grass downed trees and nearly impassible boardwalks and deep mud holes. I completed the trail in two sections Spurwink Avenue first, followed by Fowler Rd. Sheering the prickly bush side walls of the trail back was my first priority. Starting from the entrance at the Recycling Center down to the entrance on Spurwink, reopening and widening that entrance. I continued to do the same following the trail down to the marsh bridge and back and everything in between. Smaller sub trails couldn't be widened any further and no trees were removed unless downed or broken. Downed limbs were hand sawed and removed as well as low hanging branches and others that had the potential for causing future problems. Since all trails were open and trimmed I bush hogged all trails the tractor could fit on to. Cutting the grass and chopping up any remaining debris. The main trail has a comfortable width and it follows all the way through, excluding some sub- trails. Whatever could not be cut with the tractor was weed wacked including all main entrances and sub trails. After that section was complete I moved over to the Fowler Rd. entrance. Starting at the trail head I sheered back both wooded sides leading to the boardwalk and weed wacked any tall grass on the ground. The mud pit leading up to the boardwalk had

some sunken boards that I pulled out and later adjusted their positions and added to the number. The board needed sheered and wacked to the large amount of saplings growing directly off either side. Both sides of the board walk were weed wacked, trimmed and cut back at least 3 feet to provide a comfortable walking space with room to grow. The inner trail running to the public works building consisted of general sheering and cut backs low branches were removed and tall grass was weed wacked. All bridges were cleared of any lying debris. (Leaves, branches, etc.) The outer loop consisted of mainly weed whacking and mild sheering although some sawing and branch removal was necessary. I weed wacked all the grass from the bridge crossing the stream back to the marsh bridge crossing. I continued Sheering all the bushes around the board walks cutting them back a few feet and removing any broken or dead branches along the way finally completing the loop to behind public works, where assistance from public works staff was needed to repair a small bridge that folded nearly in two. 1 man from them for approximately 4 hour's time. We removed half the bridge, jacking up the remaining side and placed rocks and fill under it for stability. We then replaced the smaller section attaching it with reinforcements and screws also using rocks and fill for stability. 1 large fallen tree was removed from the trail as well as several smaller ones throughout.

Gull Crest trails received nearly the same attention and was on a similar maintenance schedule as the Highlands though altered because due to size and priority. 2-2.5 days once a month but may not have been done in consecutive. Maintenance could be completed once a month in about 2 days or less depending on growth.

## **Conclusion**

Getting in a general maintenance schedule becomes tough due to how long it actually takes to complete some of the longer trails. Winnock woods, Cross Hill and Leighton farms all connect to each other and should be completed as a block as well as the Town Center, Scott Dyer, Gull Crest and the Spurwink Trail systems. As well as Loveitt woods and the Stone gate trail, and on the opposite side of town Whaleback Way, and the Great Pond Trails. If it's possible to group the trails up in such a manner

it would become easier to maintain starting a cycle and creating a flow that will keep all the trails organized and on a schedule.

Respectfully Submitted,

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December 5, 2011