

MEMORANDUM

TO: Cape Elizabeth Conservation Commission
FROM: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner
DATE: December 9, 2014
SUBJECT: Greenbelt Signage review

Introduction

The current greenbelt signage system has been in place for over a decade, with new elements added every few years. The Conservation Commission continues to identify signage as a priority and will conduct a comprehensive review of all signage currently in use and consider modernization of the system.

Overall signage concept

The first greenbelt signage system was adopted in the mid-1990's. At the time, it was a major break from the idea that signs would detract from the natural experience of walking on a trail. It was several more years, however, before all greenbelt trails were signed. At this time, the Conservation Commission emphasis has shifted to prioritizing wayfinding for trail users.

Management of Greenbelt and Open Space Plan

In May, 2012, the town council adopted the Management of Greenbelt and Open Space Plan and accompanying amendments to the Conservation Ordinance (Chapter 18). The management plan, prepared by the Conservation Commission, established management policies for the 1200± acres of public access held by the town. Signage is addressed as follows:

Signage

Policy: Town greenbelt signs adhere to a consistent design and prominently state that the trail is provided by the Town of Cape Elizabeth in order to educate the public about the Town Greenbelt system.

Greenbelt trails constructed and maintained by the Conservation Commission are marked at regular intervals with 4 by 5 inch metal signs as seen below.



Larger 8 by 12 inch versions of these signs are placed where they can be seen at major trail heads to make the location of trail systems easier to find. The Conservation Commission will also identify major trailhead locations where prominent 4' x 8' trail signs, similar to the Winnick Woods sign, should be installed.

At primary open spaces, copies of the maps may be placed at the head of the individual trail systems and at significant intersections to help the public navigate the trails in the field. The public will also be able to view copies of these trail maps, accompanied by a brief narrative, electronically on the Town's public website at www.capeelizabeth.org

In addition, the public is asked to follow and respect any additional trail signage that may be posted on individual trails, such as signs asking recreational bikers to dismount over wet areas of the trail, or signs prohibiting the use of motorized vehicles on the trail system. Destroying, damaging or removing signs, kiosks or any other structure or improvement placed on Town Open Space by the Town's employees or authorized agents is prohibited under Sec. 12-1-6 of the Miscellaneous Offenses Ordinance.

Miscellaneous Offenses, Sec. 12-1-6. Defacing, Injuring Public Property.

No person shall mark or write on any public building, nor on any fence not his own nor any sidewalk, nor any other public place in this Town.

Current signage used/inventory

Below is a summary of all greenbelt signs currently used:

G signs: These are the 4"x5" aluminum signs which prominently display the town seal. They have been printed with a G, arrows, Limit of Town Property and Pedestrian Access Only.

G sign - 225



G sign right arrow - 625+

G sign left arrow - 500+



G sign Limit of Town Property - 430



G sign No motorized vehicles - 24



G sign Pedestrian Access only - 23

Trail head signs: These are 8 1/2" x 11" aluminum signs with the town seal and Conservation Commission prominently displayed. (48)



Large Trail head signs: The 4' x 8' sign at Winnick Woods is an example of a large trail head sign.

You are Here signs: These are 8 1/2 " x 11" signs printed on laminated paper showing an aerial photo with the area trails and placed at the intersection featured on the sign. There are 95 s You Are Here signs currently posted on trails.

Diamond color tags: These are newest addition to the sign collection and have been used to assign a color to trails in the Winnick Woods/Cross Hill area.

Special Purpose Signs: These signs have been created to address a specific issue. We have 8 1/2" x 11" aluminum signs that direct bikers to dismount in wet areas. Currently, we have been creating special purpose signs with the laminated paper. These signs have included Temporary Trail Closure and No ATVs signs.

Bikers Dismount Signs - 12



In addition to field signs, the town has a complete map presence on the town website, www.capeelizabeth.com. The town website includes the townwide greenbelt trails maps, plus a map of each trail as an excerpt from the town wide map and using an aerial photo. The new mapgeo feature on the town website also includes scanned images of conservation deeds for open space parcels linked to the open space map.

Potential issues:

Some of the topics the Conservation Commission may want to consider in the signage review include:

- Cross town trail sign - CELT has suggested that a uniform sign be used to mark the "cross town trail." This trail is a continuation of several trails that currently have unique names.
- Iphone ready - The commission has discussed adding scanning codes to signage as an aid to trail users for wayfinding.
- Coordination with CELT - The town maintains about 25 miles of trails, many of which intersect with CELT trails.

- Maintaining signs - Signs are routinely damaged or removed by natural or human actions. Replacing signs has to be factored into any signage policy and can be time consuming for staff and commission members.

- User friendly - Any signage policy has to be vetted for its usefulness to trail users, as well as other town greenbelt goals.