

## Management of Greenbelt and Open Space Plan, May, 2012

Pg 17

### Trail Conditions

**Policy:** Greenbelt trails are established and maintained primarily as minimally improved pathways. Selected trail improvements will be made to the degree needed to provide trail users with a rustic, enjoyable experience while minimizing impact on the natural environment. Typical trail widths will be 4 to 6 feet wide with a minimum vertical clearance of 8 feet. On wooded trails where snowmobiles operate, curved trail sections may be wider. Almost all trail surfaces will be the existing soil or grassy vegetation that is mowed periodically. Bark mulch, gravel and similar materials may be applied when the use of the trail degrades the trail surface. Water bars, shallow swales or drainage pipe may be employed for erosion control purposes.

Boardwalks, bridges and other structures will be constructed to carry trails over water or protect native soils and vegetation. On trails where snowmobiles are permitted, structures will be wide enough to accommodate one snowmobile and rider at a time. Trail improvements will not introduce grade changes where they do not naturally exist.

The Greenbelt Trail system will comply with the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act by striving to make at least ten percent of trails accessible to "other-abled" trail users. The rustic nature of greenbelt trails makes it problematic to make all trails accessible at the same level as the built environment because preservation of the natural environment is also a goal of the trail system. ADA requirements provide an exemption for nature trails in these conditions. Nevertheless, the Town will not make trail improvements on rustic trails that increase inaccessibility of trails. For example, when boardwalks or bridges are constructed, the ends will include ramps or will merge at grade to the adjacent trail surface.

In order to preserve trail surface stability and manage trail maintenance costs, the Conservation Commission may restrict use or close a trail for a season or during wet conditions. Notification of a closed trail will be posted at the trail and on the Town website.

Greenbelt trails are used by almost everyone who visits the Town's open spaces. Many trails are heavily impacted by foot traffic, bicycles and, in some places, snowmobiles and horses. Accordingly, virtually all open space maintenance efforts will be directed to the upkeep and improvement of the trail system. The Town of Cape Elizabeth will make all reasonable efforts to

maintain the greenbelt trail system within budget limits, however, trail users are expected to use common sense and avoid trails when natural conditions make them hazardous.

Pg 24

## **Horses**

**Policy:** Horses are allowed on designated greenbelt trails. Due to the extreme sensitivity of a horse's nature and its inherent unpredictability, all other trail and open space users shall heed all warnings and requests from horse riders, whether mounted or on foot. Dogs must be restrained in the vicinity of horses.

In 2011, there are approximately 130 horses owned and boarded in Cape Elizabeth. The majority of these are boarded at 4 farms.