



Woodbridge Trails Handbook

Management, Maintenance, and General Guidelines

Last updated February 2020

Woodbridge Trail Master: trailmaster@woodbridgect.org

The town of Woodbridge has over 35 miles of trails crossing property owned by the Town of Woodbridge, the Woodbridge Land Trust, and the Woodbridge Park Association. The design, management and maintenance of these trails require the participation of all these groups and their volunteers.

The purpose of this handbook is to ensure consistency among all of the trails in the town of Woodbridge through the use of common practices, and to clarify the roles and responsibilities for the management and maintenance of these trails. As members and volunteers of the maintaining organizations change over time, knowledge of these practices must be preserved. This handbook strives to provide a consistent and central location for this knowledge.

This handbook has been developed and is maintained by members of the groups owning properties with trails (Town, Land Trust & Park Association). It will be reviewed, updated, and enhanced annually in early winter of each year with participation from all mentioned groups.

The basis for this handbook is the North Country Trail Handbook created by the National Parks Service. Rather than recreate the fine work in that publication this Handbook seeks to provide information specific or unique to Woodbridge. Where the Woodbridge Trails Handbook lacks sufficient information please reference the current draft of the North Country Trail Handbook.

REFERENCE:

<https://northcountrytrail.org/volunteers/resources/trail-management-design-construction-and-maintenance/>

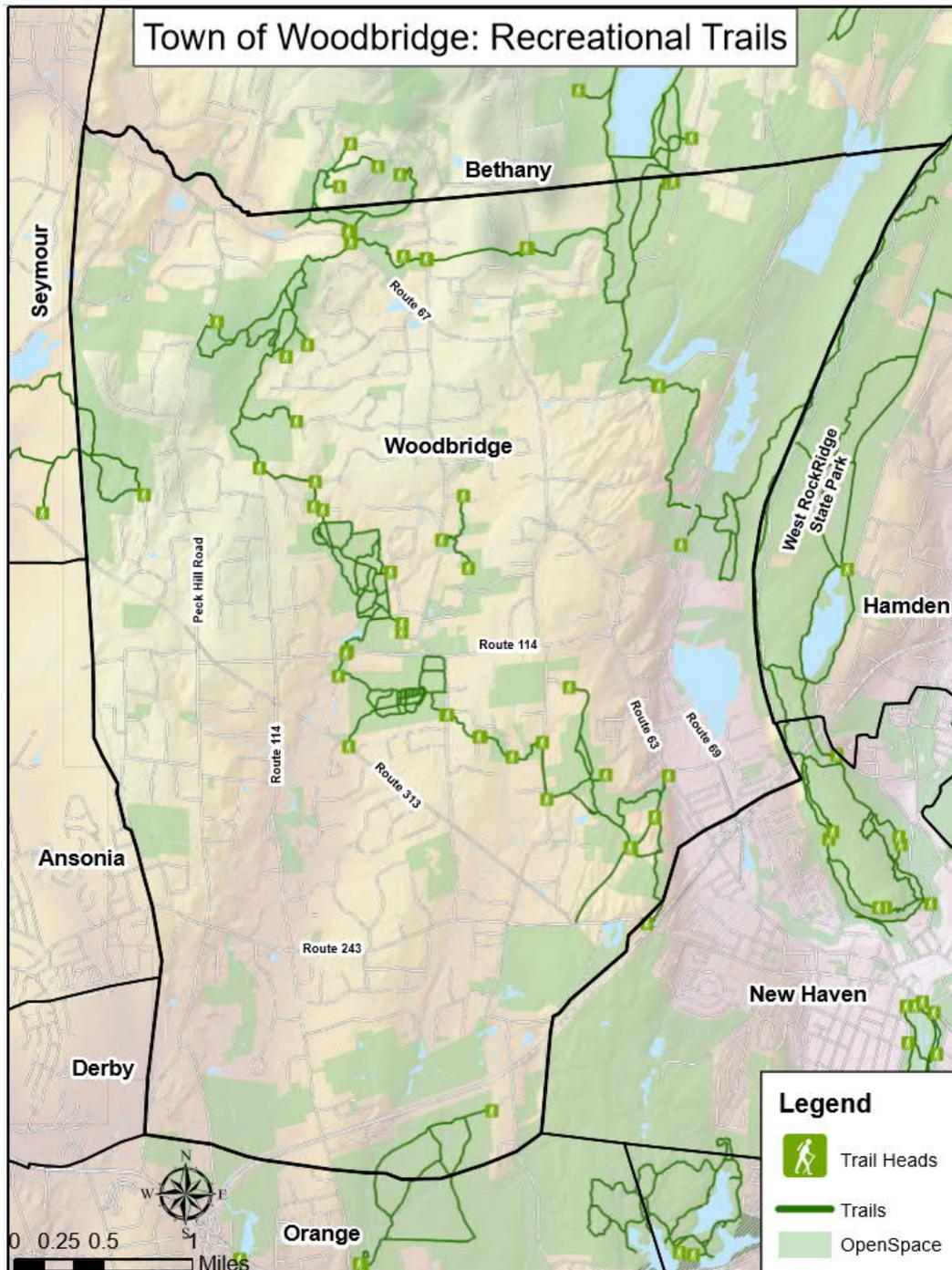
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1 - Overview of the Woodbridge trail network

Inventory of trails

Map of town with all trails indicated



Map is created by SCRCOG.

Ownership and responsibilities

Woodbridge Trail Master: trailmaster@woodbridgect.org

Table of trails with at least one trailhead address indicated:

Parcel	Assessor Address (trailhead address)	Owner	Responsible for Management	Trails
Bishop Estate and Darling House trails	1907 Litchfield Tpk.	Town and Regional Water Authority	Town	Blue trail, Red trail; connects to West Rock
Bishop West	1907 Litchfield Tpk.	Town and Land Trust has a small parcel	Town	Blue trail.
Bladen's Brook Russell Swamp & Round Hill	236 Newton Rd	Town	Land Trust	Blue trail, yellow trail. Connect to RWA and Bethany
Elderslie Preserve	211 Peck Hill Rd	Town	Land Trust	Blue trail, white trail, yellow, orange and red. Connects to Russell Swamp and Alice Newton.
Fitzgerald Tract	100 Center Road	Town	Town	Blue, white and red. Connects to Alice Newton and Race Brook Estates
Historic Indian Trails	29 Park Lane	Town and Eversource	Land Trust	Blue trail, white, yellow, red and blue/yellow
Alice Newton Street Park	7 Meetinghouse Ln	Park Association	Park Association	Blue, red, yellow, white
Wepawaug Falls	7 Meetinghouse Ln	Wepawaug Falls	Land Trust	Blue trail
Newton Road Park	(trailhead) 7 Hampton Drive	Park Association	Park Association	Red, white and orange
Race Brook Estates	2 Woodside Dr.	Town	Land Trust	Blue trail. Connects Fitzgerald to Historic Indian Trails
Racebrook Tract	971 Racebrook Road	Town	Town	Red, green, white, purple

Goals and objectives

The overall goal of the trail system is to provide a usable and safe experience for residents and visitors. The objectives of the trail system are to provide connectivity to other trails and amenities; to conduct regular maintenance, and to ensure the trails are well marked.

Volunteers

Volunteers are crucial for the maintenance of our trails. They are relied upon to notify maintenance coordinators of trail needs. They come to organized events to assist with the actual clean up. And they are our biggest advocates to bring more people to the trail network to enjoy our scenic town.

Training

Volunteers should require minimal, if any, training. Skilled tool use, such as chainsaw operation, is not meant to be done by volunteers. Volunteers should be provided basic education when pruning to assure they properly identify invasive species and correctly prune and protect native species.

2 – Maintenance Guidelines

In general, trails should be maintained so that debris and fallen trees are removed from trails. Tree limbs and brush are cut to provide clear passage 1 foot from either edge of the trail. Dead or dying trees when presenting potential safety hazard are brought down safely. The condition of signage and bridges should be noted also.

Unsanctioned trail blazes should be removed or obscured.

Frequency

The frequency of maintenance is to be determined by the organization managing each trail.

Woodbridge Land Trust

The Land Trust performs inspection walks. Later they return to complete the work. See Appendix A for the worksheet they use to track and manage their maintenance.

Woodbridge Park Association

The Park Association relies upon eye witness reports. They also have regular maintenance performed by a trail master.

Town of Woodbridge

The town has a trail master who is notified of maintenance issues and coordinates the necessary tasks.

Seasonal trail maintenance tasks

Maintenance can be grouped into seasonal types of tasks as indicated in the graphic below.



The tasks found in the graphic above are detailed as follows:

Prior to Memorial Day – January through May

This may be the maintenance period that involves the most work. The objective is to get the trail ready for the spring hikers. In addition to general trail cleanup, some of the more important tasks are to:

- Remove tree limbs and fallen trees from the trail, and prune encroaching limbs as needed.
- Repaint or replace the blazes if they are faded or missing. (Be sure that they are not obscured by vegetation—consider growth that occurs before the next maintenance).
- Make sure that all signs and trail emblems are in place and well maintained.
- Inspect for water in the trail and take corrective action.
- Carefully inspect all bridges—immediate safety needs should be met and tasks which are too large for immediate action noted.
- Maintain all trailheads and other support structures.
- Keep a list of larger jobs or those that require different tools that will require attention at some other time.
- Schedule time for major projects that were identified—round up tools and volunteers.
- Pick up litter.

Mid-Summer – June through August

Early July is a good time to take care of annual growth so that the trail is kept clear and relatively easy to hike. The hiker should not be assaulted by weeds and briars. Some of the key jobs for mid-summer are to:

- Mow or cut all weeds, brambles, briars, and high grass encroaching on the trail. On sections of the trail that pass through fields or other places receiving direct sunlight, mowing may have to be done on a more frequent basis—perhaps monthly throughout the summer. Brambles and briars may need to be grubbed out by the roots to prevent rapid regrowth.
- Prune all brush and overhanging limbs that have grown into the trail clearing—all blazes and signs must be visible.
- Complete the larger jobs that could not be accomplished the previous spring.
- Maintain and improve water bars, drainage ditches, and all trail structures.
- Be alert for invasive plant species—remove or inventory them for future vegetative management projects.
- Pick up litter.

Fall – September through December

Fall maintenance is geared toward preparing the trail for the winter months. This is a time to:

- Finish any uncompleted jobs and recheck blazes and signs—replace and repair as necessary.
- Be sure that bridges and structures are clean and in good repair.
- Contact volunteers and landowners with easements to thank them for their support.
- Pick up litter.

3 – Signage and Blazing

Major trailhead sign should name the parcel, include a trail map with a description including difficulty level, clearly label what type of activities are restricted.

Standards

The following standards apply to all signs on the trails, regardless of parcel owner or maintainer:

Major trailheads have signs clearly identifying the trail name and permitted uses of the trail. Additionally, as funds permit the major trailheads signage should include a laminated trail map and QR code that links to online maps of the trail.

Wayfinding signs are placed at junctions with other trail networks. As appropriate, these signs clearly indicate changes in trail names, property boundaries, or direction to a nearby trailhead. QR codes can be added to provide additional information including maps or “here you are” indicators with an online map.

Signs should be sized and colored in a manner they are obvious to hikers yet not too obnoxious they detract from the outdoor experience.

Blaze standards

All trails in the town should be blazed using the paints from Nelson Paints. In particular their Boundary Mark type of paint.

<http://www.nelsonpaint.com/boundary-mark.html>



Using a standardized paint brand will provide consistent blaze color regardless of property line. When possible, trails should maintain the same color throughout instead of changing color at property lines.

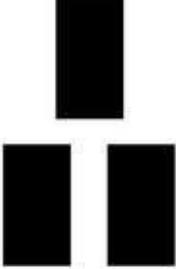
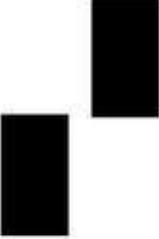
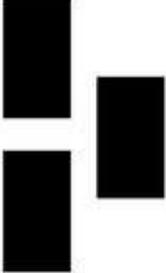
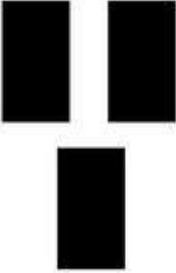
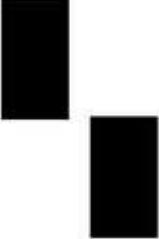
Blazes should adhere to the following standards

- Size is to be 6" tall and 2" wide

- Painted in a vertical orientation
- Painted at roughly 5-feet above ground level on trees
- Changes in trail direction are clearly noted

Blaze patterns

The following trail blaze patterns will be used when adding and updating trail blazes

<p style="text-align: center;">CONTINUE STRAIGHT</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">START OF TRAIL</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">RIGHT TURN</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">SPUR LEADING TO A DIFFERENT TRAIL</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">END OF TRAIL</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">LEFT TURN</p> 

Maintenance and management

Trail blazes are inspected at least once per year, ideally when trees are fully leafed immediately followed by appropriate remediation. Once maintenance needs are noted the blazes must be corrected within 60-days. Blazes are crucial to assure hikers know the proper way through our trail network and have a positive experience.

Signs are inspected annually. When maintenance needs are noted the signs should be corrected within 90-days. Trailhead signs have a higher priority for maintenance than wayfinding. But at no time should the signs become illegible or inaccurate to hikers.

4 - Trail design

NOTE – This section to be completed in 2020.

This section gives general guidelines for designing new and altering existing trails.

Volunteers must not design, build, or alter trails without approval from owner of trail.

Objectives

Describe objectives related to general trail design.

- Connections with other trails
- Access to public
- Environmental impacts

Process

Describe the general process used to design trails.

- When are trails created
- When are trails altered
- Are public meetings needed
- Is this document updated
- Etc.

Considerations

General considerations when a trail is designed:

- New trails
- Redesign of existing trails

Resource protection

Natural resources – water, flora, fauna, geological, etc.

Man-made resources – roads, sidewalks, dams, culverts, bridges, etc.

Historical resources – examples include Quarry and kiln, Native American artifacts, etc.

5 - Trail construction

NOTE – This section to be completed in 2020.

This section sets forth standards for all trails.

Volunteers must not design, build, or alter trails without approval from owner of trail.

Standards

Standards such as:

- Width
- Slope
- Drainage
- When structures are needed

Accessibility

Guidelines for general access and accessibility to people of varying abilities.

Safety

Agreed upon standards for safety including:

- Rotten trees
- Water crossings
- Erosion

