

Bristol Town Administrator

From: Porter Knight <knight@gmavt.net>
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 10:36 AM
To: knight@gmavt.net
Subject: trail work

Hey Trail Friends,

If you would like to do trail work, **please contact me** – we have several projects of varying degree of difficulty (from super easy for people of all ages to more technical).

But **PLEASE - Do. Not. Ever. do trail work of any kind without discussing it with me.** The Bristol Trail Network exists through the generosity of many landowners, both public and private. We have numerous agreements with these landowners, and it is crucial that any trail work that is done be part of our overall plan. Furthermore, there may be a reason why a particular segment of trail is the way it is, even if it seems to you that it might be better if it were different. And lastly, we follow certain trail development guidelines in order to create a sustainable trail that looks as natural as possible, so any improvements need to be in keeping with that.

If you want to help the trail, we welcome your help and want to hear from you. If you want to do trail work, I have projects for you and want to hear from you. But never “improve” a trail on your own. If you see something that you think needs attention, take a picture and call or email me and we can discuss it. But DO NOT just “fix” it. Even if you have been part of a trail crew before in a particular area and think you know what needs doing, please do not proceed without contacting me. Even if it seems like a “little” or “simple” thing – just ask first.

So now you’re all wondering “What on earth happened?” Three things: first, someone widened a section of trail by cutting some scrub trees. This is not okay. Those trees were doing a job and we left them there on purpose when we put that section of trail in. The BTN is not constructed as a highway and there are many places where weaving a bit in and around trees is better for a bunch of reasons than just cutting those trees. Furthermore, they cut the trees poorly, at shin height, which is unsightly at best, and dangerous at worst. The scrub tree will actually continue to grow - so if the person thought they were widening the trail, they actually were just cutting current growth but the scrub will be even bushier next year AND will have sharp shin-height stumps hidden in the new growth. Second, someone moved lumber that was stashed by the trail being used by our intern to armor the bench. I don’t know why they moved it or what their intention was. If any of you know about any of this, I’d love to hear from you. Again, we *welcome* volunteer help on the trail – we just want it to be coordinated and appropriate. Lastly, earlier this summer someone spontaneously created a new piece of trail without consulting with us first. Luckily, the person immediately stepped forward, this has been addressed, and the landowner was gracious. But it is never acceptable to create new trail without explicit permission of the landowner and the Bristol Trail Network.

Vigilante trail construction or modifications can jeopardize the whole trail network. Let’s work together.

Thanks. Looking forward to seeing you all out on the trail soon.

Porter

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