



Stafford Conservation Commission

Field Work

Field work outline

- ▶ Review mission statement
- ▶ Focus on Dennis Pond Conservation Area
 - ▶ Dennis Pond history and usage
 - ▶ Past Conservation Commission efforts at Dennis Pond
 - ▶ Beaver Trail work
 - ▶ Photos before and after
 - ▶ To-do: wood chips, signs, etc.
 - ▶ Financials
 - ▶ Schofield Trail
 - ▶ Dennis Pond Conservation area – why preserve
- ▶ Woodlawn Trail and West Stafford Conservation area

Stafford Conservation Commission mission statement

- ▶ To work to promote sound land use practices in conjunction with our town, county and state agencies and commissions.
- ▶ To increase public awareness of the ecology.
- ▶ To promote community responsibility and awareness of our conservation needs and to encourage outdoor activity.



Dennis Pond history

- ▶ 1880 Dennis Reservoir created to provide ice for refrigeration sources
 - ▶ Main source of ice blocks for the Borough
 - ▶ Popular for ice skating and swimming
 - ▶ Two summer homes were built on the east shore
- ▶ 1968 town purchased pond and surrounding 43 acres
- ▶ 1980's renovations made to create picnic and swimming area
- ▶ 1996 Conservation Commission assumes stewardship of Dennis Pond
- ▶ 1999 CT Environmental Review Team field review and report
- ▶ 2002 cinder block building renovated and sign erected
- ▶ Early 2000's Beaver Trail cleared
- ▶ 2002-2019 and 2021 Kids' fishing derby sponsored by Conservation Commission held
- ▶ 2018 Schofield Trail opened on Earth Day
- ▶ 2023 Beaver Trail renovations begun

Usage at Dennis Pond

Usage

Following photos show the various passive recreation usage of the Dennis Pond Conservation Area.

Dennis Pond is appreciated by townspeople as a tranquil setting to enjoy fishing, hiking and wildlife observation, and it should be preserved and protected as such. It is a significant habitat for a variety of migrating and nesting birds. Bald eagles and osprey are often seen here.

Dennis Pond Usage

Passive recreation



Canoeing and other non-motorized watercraft...

Usage



picnicking, fishing or just cooling off the dog on a hot summer day...

Usage



photographing and enjoying nature or just relaxing in nature...



Usage

ice skating and ice fishing...

last but not least...hiking!



Hiking on Beaver Trail



Hiking on Schofield Trail



Past efforts

Past efforts at Dennis Pond

Photos represent efforts of the Conservation Commission from 2016 through 2022

Past efforts

Conservation Commission Past efforts

Service berry tree planting



Past efforts

Trail clean-ups and maintenances



First bridge built March, 2020

Partially built with reclaimed materials



Notes: corduroy bridges will be discussed later
This bridge has been relocated from original location



Before photos

Before Photos at Dennis Pond

Photos to detail the issues met on Beaver Trail prior to 2023 efforts

Before photos

Before 2023 efforts

Roots...



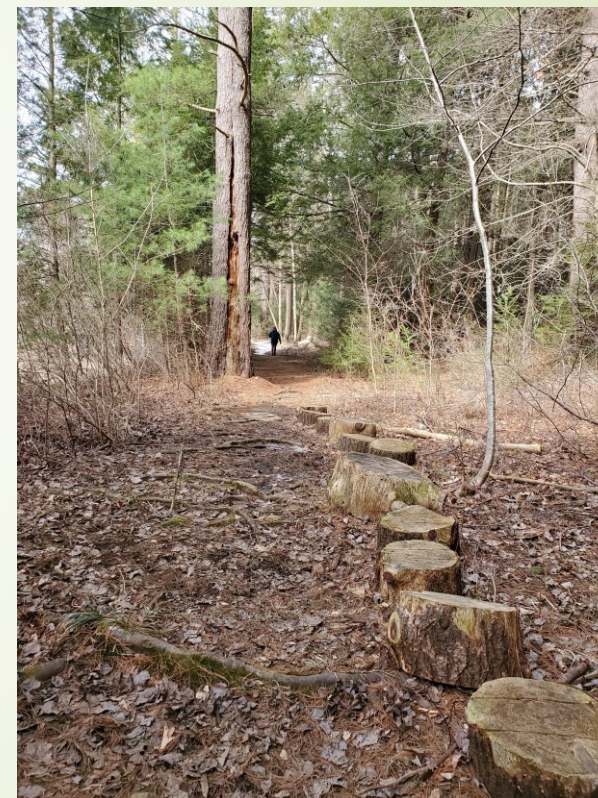
Before photos

More roots (wet season)...



Before photos

Stump path



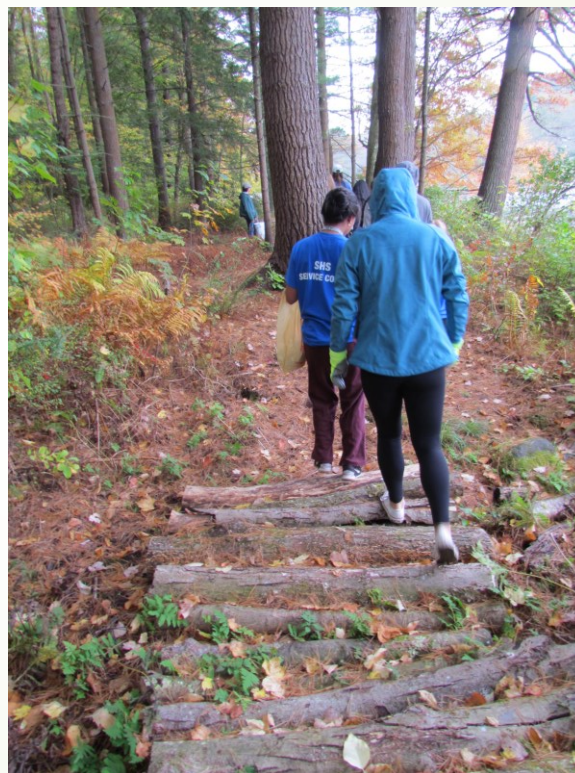
Before photos

Swampy areas on trail



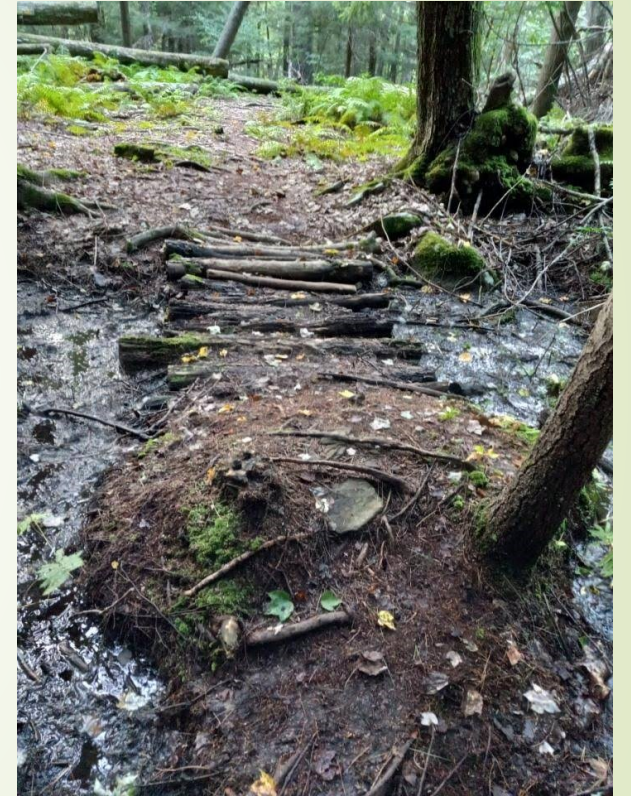
Before photos

Corduroy bridges



Before photos

More corduroy bridges...



Before photos

Water (and ice) everywhere!



Beaver Trail is susceptible to water on the trails





2023 Work Effort

2023 Work Effort

Building bog bridges and laying down wood chips

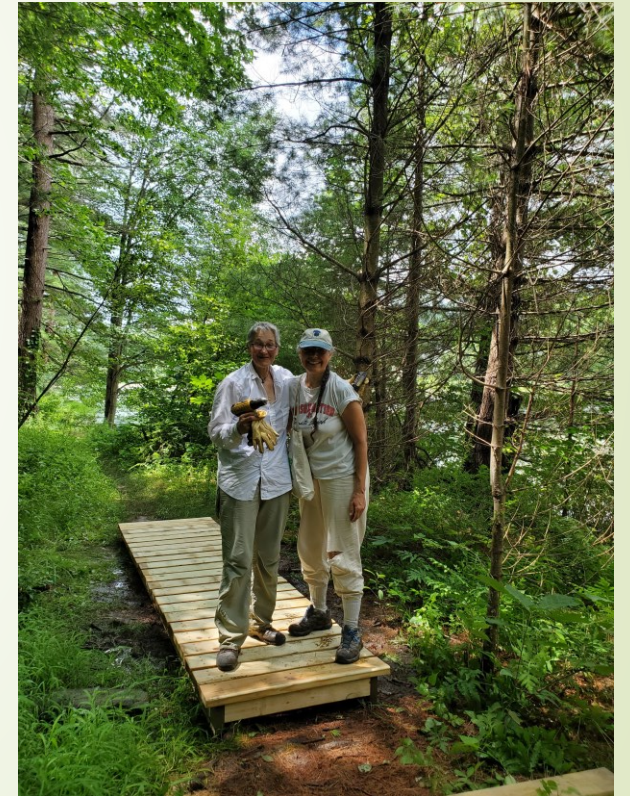
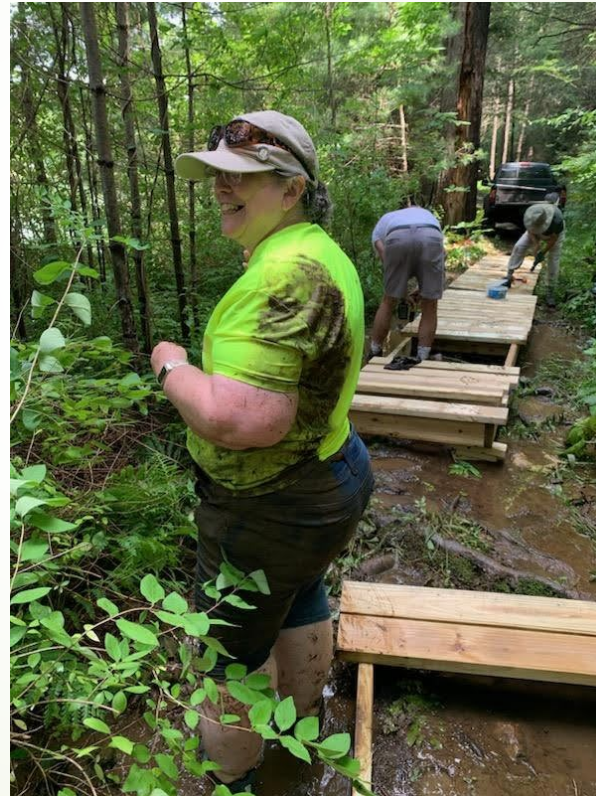
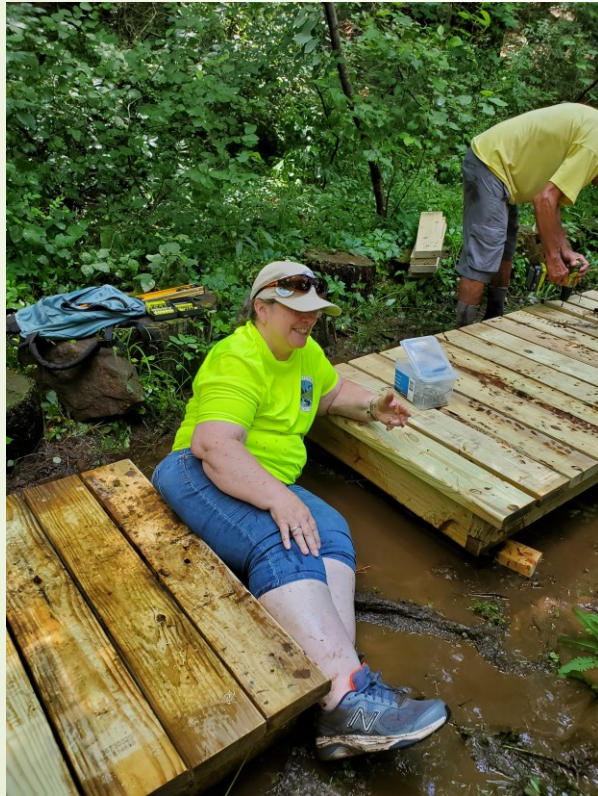
2023 Work Effort

Building bog bridges (day 1)



2023 Work Effort

Building bog bridges (day 1)



Mud is slippery...let's avoid this in the future!

A finished bog bridge

2023 Work Effort

Building bog bridges (day 2)



Everything had to be carried in



2023 Work Effort

Tools and materials hand delivered to a site

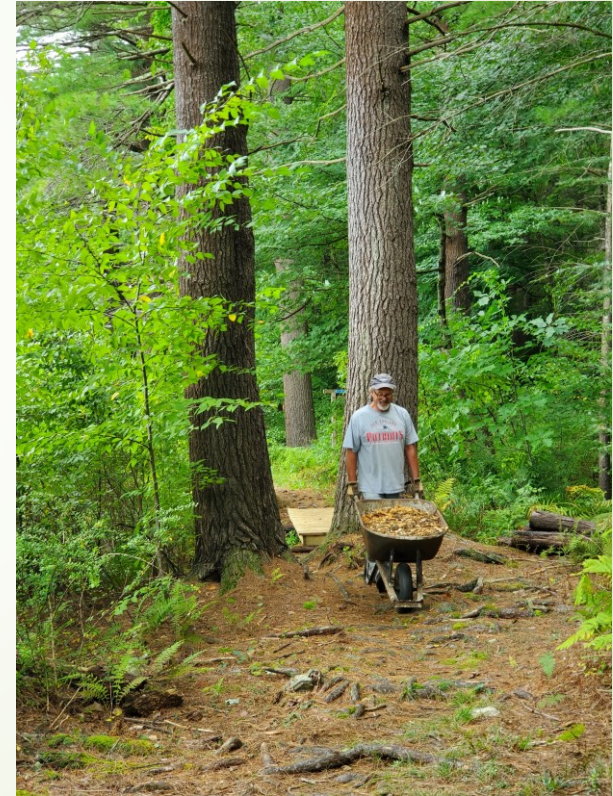
As noted, all tools and materials had to be carried in.

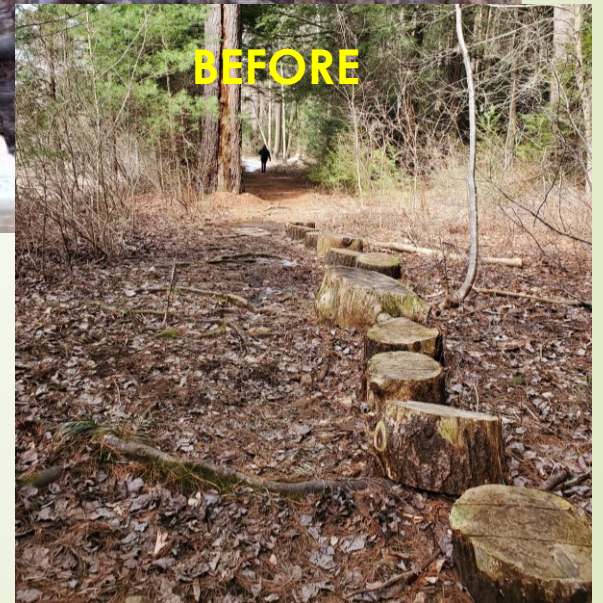
2023 Work Effort

Laying down woodchips



Wood chips had to be wheeled to spots on trail and then spread





2023 Work Effort

Cupcake enjoys a finished bog bridge

Note the stumps this bridge is replacing.

Approximately 167 feet of bog bridges completed in 2023!

Comparison of a site

Before



After



What the public has said

- ▶ Tammie B: Thank you all!
- ▶ Gale M: Fabulous
- ▶ Jodi H: Oh, that's exciting!!
- ▶ Cindy B: Thank you for all your hard work.
- ▶ Zachary S: Great quality job there! Yeah, it'd definitely be worth the trip!
- ▶ Kristy L: We love Dennis pond trail!! Thank you for maintaining!
- ▶ Cheryl C: Looks like a beautiful place to walk, calming and peaceful
- ▶ Kylee M: Thank you for all your hard work!
- ▶ Sabrina C: Oh this is wonderful to see!



Beaver Trail to-do

- Place rocks to support bridges at 7-9 sites
- Wood chips to cover tree roots
- Keep trail narrow and on higher ground where possible (i.e. away from water's edge to prevent erosion)
- Two more sites need bog bridges
- Repair ruts, remove ramps
- Install signs
- Continued next page...

Beaver Trail to-do

- Plunge pool per D. Perkins
- Clean exit to pond per D. Perkins



Beaver Trail Financials

- ▶ Kelly-Fradet (lumber, fasteners, wheel barrows) 1086.58
(included pressure treated wood, wheelbarrows, star drive screws)
- ▶ Various trail signs 205.07
- ▶ Trail cams and flash memory cards 182.97



Schofield Trail

Schofield Trail

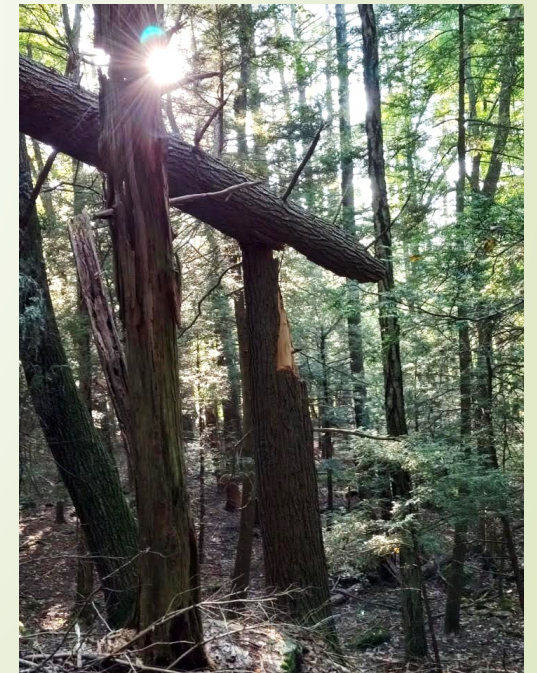
Schofield Trail was opened at the Earth Day Celebration in 2018.

Schofield Trail is a 0.5 mile (1,000-step) route located at Dennis Pond near Downtown Stafford, CT. This route has an elevation gain of about 111.5 ft and is rated as medium.



Schofield Trail to-do

- ▶ Trail sign at junction with Beaver Trail
- ▶ Lookout: remove trash, dismantle fire pit
- ▶ Tree blowdown area
- ▶ Clean out stream
- ▶ Remove corduroy bridge and replace with bog bridge
- ▶ Due to large fallen trees over trail possibly will need to re-route trail
- ▶ Create water bars across old roadway where there is erosion due to heavy rainfall



Why protect and preserve Dennis Pond Conservation Area

- It is a natural habitat for wildlife
 - Sightings of migrating bird life.
- Preserve trails for viewing pond
- Dennis Pond is in Stafford's economic justice zone - better preservation enables grant awards
- Preserve as nature environment - protect trail and tree roots



West Stafford Conservation Area

The West Stafford Conservation Area consists of hiking trails and a marked arboretum. There are two vernal pools. There is a quarry of quartz but visitors are asked to not disturb the delicate hillside where the quartz is located. Mining of the quartz is forbidden.

Woodlawn Trail

The trail is named in the memory of Julius Converse who owned the large farm and hayfield. The hayfield was later transformed into the great lawn for the Converse mansion Woodlawn. Today, it is known as Hyde Park. The trail head is behind the Witt School (old high school) and except for a steep initial incline, the trail is a 2 mile easy walk which brings the hiker to private spring fed wells, massive stone walls, lovely vistas of the river valley and a large vernal pool.

Woodlawn Trail





Questions?

Find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/staffordconservationcommission>