HMCA Activities Update

by Diana Todd

for sharing at the November 14, 2016 meeting of the HPC

A summary of what HMCA has been doing in the interval since the last HPC meeting in early September.

1. The Trail Committee has finished creating the Cross Mountain Trail, which cuts across the former ski area from the Tower Trail near our border with Ed Metcalf’s land to where the Bishop Trail branches off from the former Meadow ski slope. The Committee is now in the process of blazing the trail and installing signposts. The trail maps have been updated to show the new trail and posted online. Copies of the new map have been shared with Molly Stark State Park and the Southern Vermont Natural History Museum. New “You Are Here” maps will be posted at the kiosks sometime in November.
2. Four volunteer work sessions have been held for the ESH project. One more is planned, for Nov. 12. The volunteers have been productive, but as expected, because this is the biggest of the five slopes in the ten-year project, it became clear that we would not be able to complete the work on schedule in 2016. Using the $1,000 approved in the 2016 budget plus a $500 donation earmarked specifically for this project, HMCA has hired Robert Spring, a professional logger, to supplement the work of the volunteers. The primary focus of his work will be to open up an access route to the ESH clearing from the Tower Trail, so that we won’t have to continue crossing Ed Metcalf’s private land at the bottom of the slope. Ed’s been a great neighbor on this project, allowing us to park at his chicken coop on Route 9 and to cross his property for the work parties, but we can’t maintain that as our primary access for future monitoring efforts or educational trails through the ESH area.
3. HMCA has established a new email account: hmca@hogbackvt.org. Having an email address in our own domain (hogbackvt.org) suggests a more stable, professional organization than one at gmail.com, like our former address. The former gmail.com address also had been presenting problems with email delivery through the Mail Chimp system.
4. HMCA has opened a PayPal account and established a Donate button on the website through PayPal’s services for non-profits. We are not planning any active fund raising other than announcing to our email list of 300+ people that we now have the ability to accept donations via PayPal. Contributors do not need to have a PayPal account in order to make a donation; they can donate via credit card on the PayPal page for Hogback donations. PayPal immediately sends the contributor an email acknowledging their contribution.
5. HMCA has also established an Amazon Smile account. This is a program where people who purchase items via amazon.com can designate a non-profit to receive a donation each time they make a qualified purchase. The donation amount is one-half-of-one-percent of the purchase price. At this point we are not going to make this program public. HMCA Directors who are interested have been invited to designate Hogback as their Amazon Smile non-profit. We will evaluate their experiences after the holiday season.
6. Malcolm Moore attended the Backcountry Forum on Nov. 4 on behalf of HMCA and set up a display about the Hogback ESH project. The Forum is hosted by the Catamount Trail Association and the Vermont Backcountry Alliance. It is an annual event where skiers and land managers (private and public) gather to share information about backcountry skiing in Vermont.
7. At their Oct. 6 meeting, the HMCA Board of Directors agreed to explore revising the By Laws to 1) allow for a larger Board and 2) institute term limits.
8. The Hogback Facebook page now has over 600 “likes.” After a flurry of interest in the early fall, averaging about 40 visits per day, activity on the web page has subsided to about 20 visits per day.