

# Tomifobia Nature Trail Newsletter

Spring 2023



Photo: Carole Muir-Norrie

*Walking while quietly observing, is to discover the beauty that surrounds us.*

## Annual General Meeting:

Members and friends of the **Tomifobia Nature Trail** are invited to our **Annual General Meeting**.

**Location:** Community Center (old Legion hall)  
176 Rosedale – (opposite fire station), Ayer's Cliff

**Date:** May 27<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 A.M.

In 1870, a railway was opened through the Tomifobia Valley and I still remember how it sounded from my farm here in the 1970s as it carried passengers down to Boston. One day that sound stopped, and later on, a million dollars worth of steel rails were taken up. "A rail trail? What kind of crazy idea is that?" I thought at first over 30 years ago. Now, local people and many visitors from further away love the **Tomifobia Nature Trail**—a project of **Les Sentiers Massawippi Inc.**

"E-bikes" have democratized cycling and revolutionized personal mobility, allowing people to get out and maybe leave the car behind for smaller errands. Bear in mind the rules of the road (and the trails) are enforced by Quebec. Motor output must not exceed 500 W (0.671 hp) and they must have fully operational pedals. Most people will not need an e-bike to travel the trail.

—George Foster, Trail Secretary

## Trail Future

Our Board of Directors had a lengthy and productive meeting with representatives of the **Massawippi Foundation** and the **Massawippi Conservation Trust** on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to further discuss possible ways to pass the **Tomifobia Nature Trail** to the Trust to ensure its preservation and maintenance in perpetuity. This very important subject will be on our AGM Agenda and we will be welcoming opinion and direction from our membership so please try to be there! For more information about **FMF** and the fine work they do protecting land and nature, visit [www.massawippi.org](http://www.massawippi.org).

## Work Priorities This Year

### Repair of bridge 4

Structural engineer, Jeff Schoolcraft, identified a serious problem with bridge 4 (KM 13), namely loss of some substructure on the 38-foot southern approach span. We are receiving estimates to replace this professionally for a reasonable cost (not over the \$40,000 budgeted) following a plan drafted by Jeff. Unfortunately, until the repair is done and safe for the public the bridge will remain closed.



### The rest spot at KM 11

We will be cleaning up this expanded circular park, mostly finished last fall (with that huge towering "ancestor" pine tree beside Ticehurst Pond). Here's a chance for our volunteers to have a fun day or two clearing dead branches and raking some gravel, installing new picnic tables, etc. Volunteers from **Caisse Populaire Desjardin** (one of our more generous and regular benefactors)

have also offered to "get their hands dirty." The walking path on this triangular piece of extra trail property remains unchanged but needs an annual "opening up" by hand through fallen trees. Because of repeated vandalism we have replaced the damaged wooden steps with a safer gravel-covered ramp.



KM 11 rest spot

Photo: George Foster

### Resurfacing and grooming

Nature has a way of taking over our path in time. We will continue to prune branches and mow grass on the edge for visibility and the safety of travelers. We will not use a mechanical pruner of the size and type used on selected parts of the trail (e.g. overgrown with invasive Manitoba Maples) in the fall as it was too aggressive, needed more supervision, and drew some complaints.

### Mowing and pruning

The trail surface has not been groomed to perfection in recent years and some new surface may be needed. The town of Stanstead has discussed with us the possibility of helping with this at low cost as they maintain several kilometres of municipal biking/walking trail very well, and experienced workers and equipment would be available should there be an agreement.

## Véloce III

This financial aid from MTQ will be available again this year to help us in paying one half of our maintenance costs up to \$32,000. We will submit an estimation of work costs anticipated for the year. Any balance must be returned to MTQ.

## Fall 2022 Trail work

**Emile Fecteau** our heroic local contractor was very busy with trail repairs including:

- Repair and graveling a farm road access to the trail between the Ogden bridges offered to us by a local land owner as bridge 4 is closed and bridge 3 is only safe for light vehicles.
- Resurfacing between the bridges and removing dead overhanging trees.
- Repairing a dip in the trail and re-aligning the trail south of Tomifobia.
- Working with Gilles Garand clearing dead wood and using Emile's large power shovel to re-make the ditch where the trail has been flooding and becoming slippery near KM 17 in the south.
- Expanding the large, circular rest area at KM 11 with the power shovel and new surfacing and creatively placing large "sitting stones."



Emile Fecteau

Photo: George Foster

## Our 2022/2023 Board of Directors

**Richard Violette**, (president); **Michael Sudlow**, (vice president); **Joy MacDonald**, (treasurer); **George Foster**, (secretary); **Ray Banham**, **Keith Baxter**, **Jean-Christopher Vlasiu**, **Claude Fortin**; **Sonya Voggenreiter**.

**Joy** has been working to streamline the treasury and working with our bookkeeper Amy Whitcomb. **Richard** has been our spokesperson and our contact for the MRCs and MTQ. **George** identifies work needed along with **Mike** and searches for contractors. **Ray** likes to inspect the trail and has signage made. **Jean-Christophe** landed a \$5000 donation from Caisse Desjardin in exchange for some recognition on the trail and website. **Sonia** arranges to let us meet in the conference room of the Ayers Cliff medical clinic. **Claude** was able to groom the trail to hwy 55 from Ayer's Cliff for skiers this winter.



Photo: Carole Muir-Norrie

## Contact Us

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(Registered charity  
# 133444166 RR001)

For donating and membership information go to our website below.

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