

Volunteers help prepare Chester trails for public

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Contributing Writer

Dirt flew as the trail workers wielded loppers and iron rakes to yank roots and shave the trail edges. A team of volunteers, students and members of the Forest Committee gathered on Saturday to groom the newly created trails in the forest behind Green Mountain Union High School.

Excavator Sonny Gordon, owner of Sand Hill Excavation, carved out the trails this summer. The six-foot-wide trails allow two or even three people to comfortably walk abreast.

The outer loop is 1.2 miles and an inner loop brings the total to about two miles. Orienteering enthusiast and trail worker Ken Walker drew the trail map.

The trail begins in a cathedral-like forest area, follows streams and mildly ascends to

the top of a hill where the sun breaks through in patches. Deer tracks are visible, birds are chirping in the dense woods and a frog hopped out of a particularly muddy patch. Once at the top, the Route 103 traffic sounds have receded.

Students Luke Thompson and Rex Calabrese came to help.

"It's looking a lot more fresh than it did last year," said Thompson. "I run the trail with the soccer team. It runs really nicely."

"It's a pretty nice trail," agreed Calabrese who also runs it for soccer.

Committee chair and science teacher Alan Garvin said he will bring kids up there next week when school opens.

The GMUHS school board voted unanimously to put \$5,000 in the budget for the Forest Trails Project. GMUHS owns 170 acres of which only 20 are used by the building, parking lot and ball fields. The plan

is to create outdoor areas for recreation and academics.

On Sept. 10, the New Hampshire Student Conservation Association will come build a bridge needed to cross a stream.

The trails will officially open the weekend of the Chester fall craft fair September 20 said Conservation Committee head Michael Caduto whose group created the Lost Mine hiking trail off Reservoir Road and is working with the Forest Committee.

The Enchanted Forest community family event on Oct. 4 will also incorporate a bit of the trail. Coordinated by Melissa Post it will consist of storytelling, dance and song. During the evening, people will stop along a path of small campfires and, at each, will hear a story.

Caduto neighbor Cathy Mihaly took part in the work party as did teacher Karen Surma and Tim Calabrese.