**memorandum**

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| **to:** | Seth A. Coffey, shawn langston, christopher mattrick, USFS |
| **from:** | Norwich Trails Committee |
| **subject:** | ADDENDUM: Appalachian Trail Side & Corridor Crossing Trail Designations |
| **date:** | December 21, 2021 |
| **cc:** | Nick Krembs, Stephen Flanders, doug Hardy, nan cochran, ELLIOTT FISHER, jason berard |

*Background* – In its July 9 input on this topic, the Norwich Trails Committee (NTC) supported two of the three proposed Appalachian Trail side and corridor trail designations outlined in a June 2021 Small Projects Day memo on this topic. The committee requested time to reconsider the status of the **Joshua Trail** (shown in green on your proposed trails map) and would now like to readdress its status. We would also, after recent consultation with the local trail-user and trail-steward community, like to readdress the status of the **Griggs Ridge Trail** (shown in gold on your map), the **Five Corners Trail**, (far-left side of your map, the VAST trail), and the **Dothan Brook Trail** (shown in purple on your map).

*Request 1* – We request that two of the existing upper routes be authorized for the **Joshua Trail** crossing, as follows:

1. The historic, western-most and most direct route for foot travel, traditionally called the “Barred Owl Trail”.
2. The middle route as a “flow” trail for mountain bikes, as described by the USFS in its proposal.
3. If only one of the routes will be authorized, we ask that it be the “Barred Owl” route, which the NTC would maintain as a multi-use foot and bike trail, requiring work and minor relocations to avoid perennially wet areas.

*Considerations* – We offer the following considerations for authorization of the routes:

1. Both routes converge into a single path before crossing the Appalachian Trail at a right angle and continuing downhill to Joshua Road. The lower segment of the Joshua Trail would require rudimentary work by the NTC to address perennially wet spots.
2. The “Barred Owl” route offers attractive scenery, as it passes through a glen with a rocky slope on the west side. It will require some rudimentary trail work to address perennially soft areas near the Tucker Trail. The NTC is prepared to adopt this section.
3. The mountain-bike “flow” trail offers more dynamic fun for riders, but may be tedious for foot travelers, as they wind back and forth. The NTC has identified members of the mountain-bike community, who are interested in adopting this route.

*User support* – This dual configuration has the endorsement of 61 trail-using signatories to a petition the NTC received in July, advocating additional authorized crossings of the corridor.

*Request 2* – We request that the **Five Corners Trail** be authorized as a crossing, as follows:

1. This perpendicularly crossing trail goes north into the Upper Valley Land Trust’s Areson Parcel where it is a multi-use trail for foot and bike travel northward to the class IV Burton Woods Road. Old Town Highway 51 branches off the Five Points Trail immediately north of the AT crossing, heads west-northwest to Burton Woods Road, and is an historic horse route. We request an approved crossing trail open to hikers and bikers for its length north of the AT. We request that an approved crossing trail also be open to horses for the short distance north to, and including, Old Town Highway 51.
2. The perpendicular trail goes south into the Cochran Parcel where it is historically a multi-use trail for foot, bike, and horse travel. We request an approved crossing with that form of multi-use for its length south of the AT.

*Considerations* – We offer the following considerations for crossing authorization:

1. This crossing trail south of the AT and along the Old Town Highway 51 route north of the AT is a VAST route, a winter trail also used by many skiers.
2. Without this crossing for horses the horse-riding community is left with a very long route to get around the AT corridor entirely on town class IV roads.
3. The NTC is prepared to adopt the trail on the northside of the AT and the Upper Valley Land Trust is prepared to have signage indicate where the trail leads.
4. The landowners to the south (Nan Cochran and Elliott Fisher) are prepared to adopt the trail on the southside of the AT and have signage indicate where the trail leads.
5. The NTC will also ensure that signage indicates where Old Town Highway 51 leads.

*User support* – This crossing (horses included) has the endorsement of 61 trail-using signatories to a petition the NTC received in July, advocating additional authorized crossings of the corridor.

*Request 3* – We request that the **Griggs Ridge Trail** be authorized as a crossing, as follows:

1. This perpendicularly crossing trail with preliminary approval for foot travel-only, and only to the north, also goes into the Upper Valley Land Trust’s Areson Parcel where it is a multi-use trail open to foot and bike travel. Hopefully this trail can be reclassified as crossing and foot/bike multi-use.
2. The potentially connecting trail across the AT to the south follows a short distance of an old AT route and then heads directly south also leading into the Cochran Parcel, connecting with the VAST trail and other trails open to foot and bike travel. Hopefully this can become part of foot/bike multi-use crossing Griggs Mountain Trail.

*Considerations* – We offer the following considerations for crossing authorization:

1. The NTC is prepared to adopt the trail on the northside of the AT and the Upper Valley Land Trust is prepared to have signage indicate where the trail leads.
2. The same landowners to the south (Nan Cochran and Elliott Fisher) are prepared to adopt the longer, low-impact trail on the southside of the AT and have signage indicate where the trail leads.

*User support* – This crossing has the endorsement of 61 trail-using signatories to a petition the NTC received in July, advocating additional authorized crossings of the corridor.

*Request 4* – We request that the section of the **Dothan Brook Trail** between Joshua Road and the “wood pile”, where this section of old Appalachian Trail briefly leaves the USFS corridor (but is proposed to be relocated back into the corridor) also be authorized to allow horses.

*Considerations* – We offer the following considerations for authorizing horse access:

1. This section of trail provides important connectivity for the horse-riding community among class IV town roads to the east, a network of horse trails on private lands south of the AT corridor, and more class IV town roads to the west and north of the AT corridor.
2. The Jericho neighborhood is prepared to adopt this trail as horse-accessible and have whatever signage is required.
3. Many of the class IV roads and trails have a long history of being horse paths.

*User support* – This and the previous inclusion of an historic horse route has the endorsement of 61 trail-using signatories to a petition the NTC received in July, advocating additional authorized crossings of the corridor.