

Summary of Answers in the 2009 Trails Committee Report to October 14, 2008 Town Board Questions about Public Use Trails

Below are the 11 questions posed by the Caroline Town Board on October 14, 2008 (Resolution 10-1 of 2008). The answers provided here are summary conclusions from the 2009 Caroline Natural Areas and Trails Committee Report: Developing a Public Use Trail; Comprehensive Report. The Report is divided into 11 chapters corresponding to each question. Appendices at the end of each chapter contain the original email correspondences of the committee's research effort. Key sources were:

The Rails to Trails Conservancy (www.railstotrails.org)

John Bailey, Executive Vice President of Bailey Agency Insurance, Inc.

Joan Schumaker, Friends of Genesee Valley Greenway

Rick Tubbs and Derek Osborne, Tompkins County Sheriffs Dept.

Margaret Ryan, Dryden Chief-of-Police

Guy Krogh, Caroline Town Attorney

This report is available for inspection at the Caroline Town Hall, trail page on town website, and electronically at: <https://southhillrecway.wordpress.com/project-details/>

1. *What impact would a trail have on the Town's liability?*

Answer (pp. 1-12): No impact. Insurers report no increase in rates.

2. *Does a public trail adjacent to one's property or on a deeded right-of-way on one's property increase that property owner's liability?*

Answer (pp. 13-46): No, or negligibly. Homeowners adjacent to public use lands are protected by the NYS Recreational Use Statute.

3. *What impact does a trail have on the ability of an adjacent landowner to have hunting on their property?*

Answer (pp. 47-56): Measures include allowing hunting beyond a certain distance from trails to closing trails during hunting season. Encourage dialogue with hunters to develop local policies.

4. *Is there evidence that trails invite or have more crime than other public spaces?*

Answer (pp. 57-290): A two-year survey of 372 trails totaling > 7,000 miles found that incidence of crime on trails was lower than in surrounding neighborhoods for vast majority. Only three percent, mostly in South Boston reported major crimes. Minor crimes included littering or graffiti, and were corrected with trail management measures.

5. *What measures can be taken to discourage criminal activity on or adjacent to trails?*

Answer (pp. 291-294): Trail users discourage criminal activity; lights at trail heads; education via signage and outreach; pet-litter bags; promote tidiness; cut back vegetation; see also Answer #4 that trails generally result in less crime.

6. *What process adjustment should be made to be sure adjacent landowners to a proposed trail corridor are part of the feasibility and planning process?*

Answer (pp. 295-322): Individual outreach and dialogue with neighbors to the trail property to address concerns; give citizens a role in the project; arrange tours of completed trails.

7. *What funding sources are available for trail and trail-head construction?*

Answer (pp. 323-327): Funding is typically not an obstacle as there are many government and foundation grants available. The Report provides a detailed list.

8. *What surfaces are used for trails? Are there rule-of-thumb costs per linear foot for each trail surface? What are the maintenance costs of each? What trail users are encouraged and discouraged from each surface type? What options other than a municipal public works crew are available for trail maintenance?*

nance? What options could be considered for funding? User fee? What costs are associated with decommissioning a trail?

Answer (pp. 328-404): *The report provides a thorough summary of surface types, uses, and costs. George Frantz recommended crushed stone surface because it provides a sturdy base, is economical, and can be used only where needed, dovetailing with existing functional rail bed surface, further reducing costs. See: Rails to Trails Conservancy (www.railstotrails.org).*

9. Do trails increase the costs of emergency response?

Answer (pp. 405-410): *Negligible. Costs might include deploying mile markers to help users identify location.*

10. Do municipalities have a responsibility for providing special means to contact 911 for trail users?

Answer (pp. 411-412): *No.*

11. What will be the process for trail investigation from feasibility through trail construction?

Answer (pp. 413-414): *Engagement with the public, development of a plan, securing right-of-way. See Rails to Trails Conservancy (www.railstotrail.org).*