

From: Heidi Blackmer blackmer.heidi@gmail.com
Subject: Dawn Ryan and Nature Path
Date: April 7, 2025 at 10:42 AM
To: wiltonzba@wiltonzba.org, Neil.Faiman@wiltonzba.org

HB

Dear ZBA and Neil Faiman,

Following the site visit on March 15, 2025, I am writing to express my concerns regarding the Dawn Ryan Trust "Nature Path" and bridge proposal.

I respectfully request that the ZBA withhold consideration for approval until the following conditions are met:

1. **Trail Location:** The exact location of the nature trail, from its beginning to end, is demonstrated in person during a site walk.
2. **Bridge Specifications:** The precise dimensions of the bridge, including its weight-bearing properties, are clearly defined in writing.
3. **Wetlands Survey:** An independent certified wetland specialist, selected and guided by the town, conducts a thorough wetlands survey of the Ryan Trust property east of the Mill Brook, extending up to the snowmobile trail.

Justification for Requests

Trail Location: During the site walk, the primary focus was intended to be the bridge location and the trail's path. However, the trail's route was not shown. I urge the ZBA to consider Mr Mattison's avoidance of revealing the gravel "nature trail's" path to the snowmobile trail as a significant issue. During the site visit, Mr. Mattison stated that he was unsure of the exact location of the trail. I request that a solidified trail plan be submitted for review before any approval by the ZBA.

Bridge Capacity: The scope of this project has expanded from a simple footpath to a path accommodating snowmobiles, then to a minimum 6-foot wide gravel path for ATVs. Most recently, Mr. Mattison stated during the site walk his intention to use the proposed bridge and trail for a "small" tractor. The proposed width and weight capacity of the bridge has been continually increasing.

Based on Dawn's previous bridge construction, where the actual rail placement deviated from the original plan, I am concerned that the final path and bridge plans may not be as straightforward as presented to the ZBA. The plans currently state 8' +/- for the bridge width. What is the variance for the bridge width? Why does a nature trail bridge need to be 8 feet wide?

Wetlands Survey: Although permission was granted to access parcel B from parcel A to view the nature trail's path, Mr. Mattison guided us through the Hoover Trust property, avoiding an area on the Ryan parcel that I suspect contains wetlands.

On my property, just west of the snowmobile trail, there is a large area of water that has been flagged as wetlands by a soil scientist. The water from this wetlands area continues south onto the Dawn Ryan Trust property on Parcel B.

Therefore, I request an independent assessment of wetlands on lot 47-1 by a certified soil scientist. This assessment should include the area between the cart road just east of the Mill Brook and the number 13 snowmobile trail. I request that the town or the Wilton Conservation Commission select the wetlands specialist. Given Ms. Ryan's past engagement with Jim Gove to address prior wetland violations, I request that Gove and anyone from his firm be excluded as the wetlands specialist. I request that the Dawn Ryan Revocable Trust fund this expense.

As a final point, all of these concerns could be avoided if the project were reduced to a true nature trail with a thin, unobtrusive, ground-level boardwalk suitable only for foot traffic.

Please let me know if you have any questions or require further information.

Thanks,
Heidi Blackmer
126 Burton Highway

"Happiness, not in another place but this place...not for another hour, but this hour." Walt Whitman

