

Get your finances in order. Northway
FPU CLASSES BEGIN FEBRUARY 21ST BANK
 Click for details.

The Laconia Daily Sun

Latest Huot student project will double length of accessible trails in Belmont own forest

By Adam Drapcho
 Feb 08, 2012 12:00 am

LACONIA — The footbridge being built by students in the Building and Construction program at the Huot Regional Technical Education Center might not seem very long. But to a person with limited mobility, the bridge will double the accessible size of the Jeff Marden Town Forest in Belmont.

The bridge is being built as a cooperative project between the technical center and Belmont's Conservation Commission. Students in teacher Matt Towle's Building and Construction program are building the structure in his classroom on the Laconia High School campus and expect to complete it in time to be installed this spring.

Rick Ball, Belmont Land Use Technician, said the bridge will be installed in the 65-acre town forest located near Belmont High School and accessed via Wildlife Boulevard. The forest was named after a resident who, despite becoming paralyzed in his 20s, did not allow his physical limitations to curb his civic engagement or interest in the outdoors and wildlife. The forest was named for Marden's memory shortly after his death in 2007.

Ball said it was a goal of the Conservation Commission to develop a trail system throughout the forest that would be accessible to all residents. However, a section of trail was washed out through the breaching of a beaver dam on the property. Ball said the breaching is likely a regular occurrence, so the commission installed a device that will allow for a regular discharge of the beaver pond.

The bridge will provide a means for people to have access to a larger network of trails. "This will more than double it," he said. The Conservation Commission is picking up the cost of the materials. Ball and Towle estimated that the town is saving about \$1,500 by having the students build the bridge.

Benefits of the bridge are already being reaped. Towle said his students are able to use the project as a learning device while knowing their labors are going to benefit others. He said it's a philosophy that runs throughout the technical center: "Pretty much anything we do, I consider a benefit for a common cause."

In building the bridge, his students will learn how to translate a design, developed by the U.S. Forest Service, into a sturdy structure. Not only will they learn construction techniques, Towle noted, they'll also exercise geometry, science and engineering skills. "It's an extension of education," he said. "That's Huot in general."

Nethaniel Sweeney, a senior from Belmont, is one of the students working on the project. He plans to enlist with the U.S. Marine Corps after graduating. Until then, he's glad to have the opportunity to work on a project to benefit his home town. "It's giving back to the community. I've got the time, might as well put it to use," he said.

Joe Caiazzo, also of Belmont, said he's familiar with the town forest property, having ridden his bicycle through the trails. "It's great to give back to the community, it's a trail the school visits a lot," he said, adding that he's considering construction as his career. "I've always liked building, ever since I was young," he said. He started with building blocks and Legos, soon he moved on to tree

2010 LAND ROVER LR4
 CAPABLE. VERSATILE. ATTAINABLE.

LEASE FOR
\$699/month*
\$2995 DUE AT SIGNING, 36 MOS

BUY FOR
0.9% APR**
LIMITED TERM

Visit your
local retailer

DISCLAIMERS



houses and larger structures. About the bridge, he said, "It's good to know that it's going to be used, it's going to work."

CAPTION for BRIDGE in AA:

Students in the Huot Regional Technical Education Center's Building Construction Trade program, left to right, Tyler Blake, Nathaniel Sweeney and Nick Lamprey work on a foot bridge which will soon be placed along a trail in a town forest in Belmont. (Laconia Daily Sun photo/Adam Drapcho)