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Winni Trail ribbon cutting on Sept. 17

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BELMONT- After about 15 years of planning by the Belmont Recreation and Alternative Transportation Trail (BRATT) Committee, with leadership of Ron Mitchell and the support of the town's residents and staff, the vision for a paved trail in Belmont has finally come to fruition.

On Saturday, Sept. 17 at 10 a.m. there will be a trail opening ceremony that the public is invited to attend. According to committee member Donna Hepp, the details are still being worked out but she expects it to be a fairly non-formal event where members of the board of selectmen will announce the opening, cut a ribbon and say a few remarks about the project. They will also introduce people in the community have been vital to the completion of the trail.

There will also be guided tours of the 1.8 mile paved trail, with markings of where there will be things like future pollinator meadows and picnic areas. The trail is nearly 100 percent complete, she said, with just small odds and ends to take care. It is designed for walking, running, biking, cross country skiing and snow shoeing.

Hepp said on Sunday that she was out on the trail during the day and it is already being widely used by those in the community.

"We are extremely proud about how the trail has come out," said Hepp. "People out there enjoying are all with smiles on their faces. Everybody seems to really be enjoying the trail."

She said she saw people who were jogging, walking and walking baby strollers. There is an email list for people to find out information about the trail, and on Sunday she said she gained three more people for the list just by talking with them.

"That's what it is all about," said Hepp. "We are really glad this has finally come together after all this time."

The trail has been called "The Winnepesaukee Scenic Trail," or "Winni Trail" for short, and extends from Leslie Roberts Road to Osborne's Agway ending at Daniel Webster Highway. It weaves through woods and offers scenic views from across Lake Winnisquam. Phase one of the trail

began last October.

The WOW Trail, which is the counterpart in Laconia, is about to complete phase two this fall and once it does it will connect with The Winni Trail making 4.5 miles of a continuous path from Belmont to Laconia. This is part of the goal of connecting 25 miles of trails from Meredith to Franklin. The next goal for Belmont is to extend the trail west along the south shore of Lake Winnisquam.

Those attending the ribbon cutting ceremony are urged to bring their walking shoes or bicycle to check out what it has to offer. There will be parking in lots along Leslie Roberts Road and the ceremony will take place at the trail entrance adjacent to Leslie Roberts Road.

For more information log onto the Winni Trail Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/winni.trail.7>.

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