

## **TRAILS & NATURAL HABITAT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 3-10-09**

The purpose of this committee is to promote the use of Forest Heights' trails and to maintain natural habitat areas. Members walk trails regularly, monitor conditions and make recommendations regarding maintenance and improvements to both trails and surrounding natural habitat.

**MONTHLY HIKES** - The committee endorsed strongly the Community Activities Committee's proposal to hold monthly guided trail walks departing from Starbucks and lasting about one hour. Maps and descriptions of the trails are made available to the participants.

**TRAIL GUIDES**- A handout called "Popular Short Hikes" is being published. The T&NH Committee has been busy measuring trail distances and elevations, with degrees of difficulty and points of interest, along with trail loop routes and connections included.

**NEW BENCHES** - eight new benches were placed at the Park last year, concentrated around the playground areas and on the west side of the pond.

**NEW TRAILS** - Benfield Trail between upper Boulder Trail and Benfield Drive was installed in the fall by Richard and his crew, with a new bench located in a clearing near the creek at the low point of the Trail. A gravel trail on Mill Ridge St. below the Commercial Center was installed by our maintenance crew.

**TRAIL SAFETY** – Safety is our major priority. To that end, more steps were added to steep sections of Deer Run Trail and to Murdock trail between Miller Hollow Trail and Murdock St. A step was added to the Bus Spur Trail bridge between the Pond Trail and the Commercial Center.

FOR 2009 :

**SAFETY MEASURES** – including additional steps on steep trail portions or railings, and different or better anchored gravel, along with non-slip coatings for wooden bridges.

**HABITAT ENHANCEMENT** – removal of invasive species such as ivy and black-Berries and replanting with native species.

**NEW TRAILS** – discussing a new spur trail from Miller Hollow Trail to Murdock Street and from Thompson Road to Chapin Drive (this is on hold pending trail Completion by an adjoining developer

**HARDSCAPE TRAIL HEADS** – reviewing methods to prevent loose gravel from spilling onto hard surfaces next to them such as stones or sidewalks. This, too, is part of the safety mission of our Committee.

