

# Survey to determine lines between trail and private property

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TOPSFIELD — While everyone involved with Topsfield's rail trail is pledging cooperation, two sides are also trading allegations of outright invasion.

The issues hit Topsfield selectmen again this week, when Bob Morgan — accused of using part of the trail route as an extension to his backyard — said he can't wait even a month for the town to control an invading weed that's trying to take over his property.

Selectmen late Monday approved a survey to determine just where the trail route, on town property, really is. The survey will also say which neighbors, if any, have encroached on the land. The survey was requested by Rail Trail Committee Chairman Joe Geller, who accused neighbors Morgan and Mike DeAmario of annexing portions of the trail. At the same time, selectmen couldn't say when the invasive species on the property, Japanese knotweed, could be brought under control.

"Delaying weeks will cost me thousands" of dollars, Morgan said. Selectman Dick Gandt asked

Morgan not to spray weed killer on the town property, though he said he didn't know when the town would have a plan for controlling the weed, which easily spreads when cut down. Morgan said time was of the essence, saying the bamboo-like weed can grow 10 feet in days.

Later in Monday's meeting, Cathy Morgan asked how her family was supposed to control the knotweed on their property if the town was saying it wasn't sure where the property lines were. Selectman Martha Morrison said the survey, which might be completed in a month, would determine that.

"When the survey is done, everyone will know what is what and whose is whose," she said.

Two weeks ago, selectmen said the Rail Trail Committee could use herbicides on the trail route.

Selectmen repeated their pledge to never use town money on the rail trail. The \$3,800 survey is being paid with grants from the state Department of Conservation and Recreation and Essex National Heritage Commission, while \$2,500 from the DCR would help design and plan how the trail would follow the pathway.