

MAY 10, 1990

Vunteers Help Blaze Nature Trail

GILMANTON — A dozen trail-blazers and brush-clearers achieved their first goals in building a nature trail and outdoor classroom behind Gilmanton Elementary School in a workday April 28.

The 3,000-foot trail was marked for self-guided walking tours. The first 600 feet were cleared of brush, rocks and fallen trees, according to William Hoey, a federal soil conservationist.

They cleared trees and stumps from what will be the classroom area, where pupils will have "a fantastic view of Garrett Hill," Hoey said after the Parent-Teacher Associa-

tion-sponsored effort.

The workers built benches to seat about 28 pupils and piled brush where it is hoped birds will nest and wildlife will use it for cover.

The trail and classroom project, initiated last September by school Principal Thomas Brunelle, has been supported by both PTA members and other town residents. To be used by children from kindergarten through Grade 8, it lies just behind the building on 14 acres owned by the Gilmanton School District.

The trail will wind through a forest of upland hardwood and

conifers, heading downslope to Nighthawk Hollow Brook.

Here children will be able to study of wetland and stream ecology firsthand. On the workday, while temperatures soared, children used it for swimming and playing while the adults labored.

Also along the path are remnants of old logging roads, century-old red oaks, den trees, abundant wildlife and stone walls from vanished pastures, Hoey added.

The next workday will be set when the PTA meets next, according to project leader Cindy Bedford.