

**Halifax North West Trails Association
Annual General Meeting
Thursday 18 May 2023
Trinity Anglican Church, 321 Main Street, Halifax**

A G E N D A & MINUTES

Walk. 6:00 – 6:45

Join us for a short (1 km) walk on Mainland North Trail and Loop trail. (flat, easy)
Tony led the walk, joined by Audrey, Bob, Barb and Anne

Sign in and Membership Renewals 6:30 – 7:00

One new member signed up and several renewals were paid

Business Meeting 7:00 – 7:50

1. Welcome, Call to Order
 2. Acknowledgement of Mi'kma'ki territory
 3. Approval of agenda
 4. Minutes of previous AGM May 19, 2022
 - a. Changes and approval
 - b. Business arising from minutes
 5. Committee Reports for 2022-2023 (see attached)
 - a. Chair's Report
 - b. Treasurer's Report (vote required)
 - c. Maintenance Committee Report
 - d. Membership Committee Report
 - e. Trail Stewardship Program Report
 - f. Events/Communications

Jessica Boyd
Spencer Doue
Tony Cranford
Jane McKay-Nesbitt
Linda Adamson
Jessica Boyd
 6. Nominating Committee Report for 2023-2024 (see attached)
 - a. Board of Directors
 - b. Officers

Vote required
 7. Guest Speaker
 8. Adjournment – 8:25pm
- Dr. Susan Meek

In Attendance:

Audrey Peake
Jessica Boyd
Barb Bennett
Thelma Pierce
Elaine Perrott
Maureen Manuge
JJ Boudreau
Joshua Cranford

Tony Cranford
Jane Mackay-Nesbitt
Barry Mills
Wendy McDonald
Michelle Labossiere
Keith Vaughan
Barry Mills

Linda Adamson
Bob Manzera
Anne Peers
Nancy Jennings
Shirley McIntyre
Susan Meek
Claudine Cranford

22 attendees

Linda Adamson put forth a motion for approval of tonight's agenda, it was seconded by Tony Cranford – approved.

Elaine Perrott put forth a motion to adopt last year's AGM minutes, seconded by Keith Vaughan – approved.

Item 5a Chair's Report

Jessica Boyd

This is our first in person AGM in 3 years. It is a real pleasure to be here to see you all. Thank you to the Trinity Anglican Church, Jane MacKay-Nesbitt and Sharon Gibson for all you did to organize this event.

Board of Directors:

I wish to thank the members of your Board of Directors for your dedication and hard work. We continue to meet monthly, this year as in the past two, we have met online. I think we have finally figured out how to unmute ourselves.

Last year, two new members joined our board. Linda Adamson has taken over the role of wrangling our ever growing stable of trail monitors. Thank you, Linda for all your work with this important project. Tony Cranford has picked up his hammer and chain saw in the role of maintenance officer. If you were impressed by the quick response to hurricane Fiona, it is Tony, assisted by his son Josh, you should thank. And I do thank you Tony.

Sadly, this year we are losing Alyssa and Spencer Doué, who have taken on a new role of adoptive parents to two young boys. Hopefully, Alyssa and Spencer you will join us again when your boys are older. Spencer is still our Treasurer and will remain in that role until we can replace him. Thank you, Spencer for continuing to give us some of your much precious time.

Another stalwart of the Board is Michael Basford who is leaving us for greener pastures in the Margaree. Mike has been a board member for many (10?) years. I will miss his institutional memory and his knowledge of Provincial and Municipal politics. Good luck in the highlands Mike.

These departures mean we need to recruit 4 new board members. This will be the focus of my efforts for the next few months. Please reach out to me if you would like join us. It's fun, really!

Funding: This past year, 2022-2023, we applied for, received and spent \$5,000.00 in Trail Maintenance and Operational funding from HRM Parks and Recreation.

We have applied for \$5,000 for 2023-2024 Trail Maintenance and Operational funding. We expect to be approved but are waiting for the HRM budget process to be completed.

We have also been awarded \$1000 from the Active Transportation Education and Promotions Grants program. We will use this money for a special Bicycle Safety event in two days' time, on May 20.

We are very grateful for the support from HRM.

New Logo. We thought it was time to refresh our logo, which we have used for over 20 years. Neighbour Joe Popovitch, of Refuse to be Boring, designed it for us. Expect to see it more and more. Thank you Joe.

Personal. The personal highlight of the year for me was the being awarded the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal for my work with the Halifax North West Trails Association. I was nominated by

the Clayton Park West MLA Rafah DiCostanzo, and I proudly accepted the honour in service of all the past and present board members.

Support for other organizations We continue to support the Sandy Lake - Sackville River Coalition whose parkland is slated for a housing development.

We thank the many other groups and institutions that work with us towards our goals including Hike NS, NS Trails Federation, NS Environmental Network, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Friends of Clayton Park, HRM Libraries, Canada Games Centre and ISANS.

5b Treasurer's Report (vote required)**Spencer Doue**

HNWTA: 2022-23 Financial Report		
BANK BALANCE APRIL 1, 2022		\$ 27,247.84
INCOME:		
Trail Metre Sales	\$ -	
Memberships	\$ 789.43	
Donations	\$ 130.00	
Maintenance Grant - HRM	\$ 5,000.00	
Events Grant - HRM	\$ 1,000.00	
Other Income	\$ -	
TOTAL INCOME		\$ 6,919.43
EXPENDITURES:		
Insurance	\$ 780.00	
Office Supplies	\$ 20.48	
Courier/Postage	\$ 30.17	
Computer Software/Licenses	\$ 79.00	
Website	\$ 311.27	
Memberships (NSTF, RJSC, NSEN, Hike NS)	\$ 321.15	
Maintenance Equipment/Storage	\$ 1,651.04	
Maintenance Materials	\$ 193.78	
Cleaning/Sanitary Supplies (incl. doggie bags)	\$ 932.86	
Travel	\$ 105.80	
Training/Education	\$ 300.00	
Other:		
Volunteer Appreciation Event	\$ 629.71	
Honorariums	\$ 200.00	
Bicycle Event	\$ 787.27	
Benches in Memoriam	\$ 4,800.00	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$ 11,142.53
TOTAL HST PAID		\$ 650.05
BANK BALANCE MARCH 31, 2023		\$ 22,374.69

Jessica Boyd put forth a motion to accept the Treasure's Report as submitted, seconded by Bob Manzlers.

It was approved by all present.

5c Maintenance Committee Report

Tony Cranford

The following contains highlights of the past years' activities relating to volunteer work party maintenance work carried out on the trails. Main focus was the Mainland Common Loop trail and the Old Coach Road trail. Also, some work was started on the Wilderness trail to prepare for future trails making as an extensive of the Loop trail. This involved mainly cutting fallen and leaning trees and removing these from the existing pathways in place on the Wilderness trail. Other work was carried out on Belchers Marsh, Mary Clayton Loop and Little Belchers. This was mostly cutting fallen trees from windstorms and placing some gravel near transition areas from wooden walkways to paths.

In spring of 2022 the months of April and May work was focused on the Old Coach Road trail to replace rotten wood in the walkways bridges and to place gravel on places where washouts occurred. And to carry out sidewall retention rock wall work on paths to keep gravel from repeatedly being washed out on the steeper sections. This now means the washouts are now not as bad as previous. In June our main activity was placing the cedar wood chips on the common loop trail which was done mainly on June 18th by a hardworking group of volunteers.

The longest and hardest parcel of work occurred from Sept 1 to Nov 13, 2022, when a group of volunteers worked eleven consecutive weekends to carry out multiple events to spread more wood chips on Common loop trail and to cut trees that fell on the trails from windstorms and the hurricane Fiona. There was about 140 hours of volunteer hours during this time period. We received free from HRM 3 large load of wood chips and these were all placed on the loop trail during the Fall of 2022. There was also a section of trail rebuilt on the Loop trail near a large uprooted tree that was felled by the wind.

The winter season including January 2023 saw more tree cutting and removal of trees from trail sections. These were also caused by wind events. This past year saw most damage occur from windstorms. In past years more damage was hard rainstorm related. And this is when the wilderness trail work occurred in January, February, and March 2023. This was chainsaw work to cut trees that was leaning across the existing paths. And remove the wood to the sides.

The supply of wood lumber we had for repairs has now been exhausted.

Work continued into mid - April 2023 with about 10 hours of volunteer work fixing trail structures. Also, in late April 2023 about 5 hours to fix rottener and burnt wood on loop trail near the bog lookoff. In May 2023 about 5 hours of signage work, post repair and garbage pickup on loop trail.

I am in communication with HRM parks west reception and received feedback that they would do some work on loop trail in near future related to the wooden structures. Please continue the good work of 311 reporting as it does produce results. In addition to city work the maintenance volunteers will continue to replace minor items as they arise.

The general condition of the trail itself is good. but the area of concern is the wood structures themselves. They are showing more signs of decay and repairs costs going forward will increase as more of the materials are getting rotten. For example, there are a few boards on the wooden walkways on loop trail that are broken and need replacement currently.

The other main item of concern is the seemingly increase in carelessness and willful damage occurring. For example, the last repair to the bog lookoff was fire related and appeared to be intentional willful damage.

Last year we spent funds on one load of cedar wood chips and a couple loads of gravel. We were fortunate to receive 3 large load of wood chips from HRM for free. I am trying to get another load of free wood chips from HRM urban forestry, but this may not happen. May have to spend and buy some. The loop trail could use another topping up of wood chips soon.

Most months see about 20 hours of volunteer maintenance work party hours. The big events this past year were the Spring wood chips spreading and the Fall wood chips spreading that went on for an extended period. We took advantage of the free wood chips opportunity. And the Fall saw many trees downed by windstorms that required significant time to cleanup.

5d Membership Committee Report

Jane McKay-Nesbitt

“Your membership matters! There is strength in numbers.”

Committee members: A huge thank you to Sharon Gibson and Alyssa Doue who played an important role in membership in 2022 but who have now retired from the HNWTA Board and Membership Committee. Jessica Boyd and Jane McKay-Nesbitt (Chair) are seeking new members for this committee.

Membership numbers: As of April 30, 2022, there are 121 paid up members and 11 memberships are up for renewal. I am pleased to report that several trail monitors who had not previously been members are now members.

Responsibilities of the membership committee include:

- Keeping paper and online membership application forms
- Welcoming new members (email); sending new members a membership card and badge; enrolling new members in HNWTA newsletter; letting other Board members know about new members' volunteer interests; monitoring membership online fee payments
- Encouraging participants in HNWTA activities to join the HNWTA
- Managing the membership renewal process by sending reminder emails
- Soliciting new members in person and via email
- Keeping membership records up to date
- Participating in hosting volunteer appreciation events

Online membership applications and payment system: With very few exceptions, all membership applications are submitted and paid for online.

Thank you to all those who assist in recruiting members and managing the membership process.

5e Trail Stewardship Program Report

Linda Adamson

There have been some significant changes over the last year with the number of trail monitors and the collection of information submitted by our monitors through their online reports.

1. Thanks to the computer expertise of Chris Tabone, the online report form has been streamlined with the goal of reducing duplication of questions for the user. This has sped up the time needed to complete/submit their report. Then all of the information on the reports is downloaded onto a spreadsheet. Each section of the report is given a column on the spreadsheet. This allows me, the coordinator, to quickly read all of the submitted issues and follow them along until they have been resolved.

2. Over the last three years, Covid made it difficult to meet with our trail monitors in person or to train new volunteers. One of my first tasks was to contact all trail monitors that we had contact information for to see if they still wanted to remain an active trail monitor or not. I had a good response. We have 12 trails and of those there was at least one trail monitor for 11 of the trails.

3. Next task was to recruit new trail monitors with the goal to have two monitors per trail so that the monitors would only need to do an inspection every other month. I recruited successfully through our newsletter and website. Over the year I got a response from 10 interested people of which 6 committed to becoming a trail monitor.

4. I introduced the trail monitors on each trail to each other so that they could share their inspection reports and communicate issues they had reported to 311 and had received a reference number for. They then could all check to see if the issue had resolved on future inspections.

5. I did an in-person orientation for all 6 new recruits on the trail they were volunteering to monitor. I pointed out common reportable issues that they would report to 311 and note in their online report. I reviewed their reports and gave feedback when required. They are all doing very well with inspections and submitted reports.

6. Currently, we have 2 trails with one monitor, 8 trails with two monitors and 1 trail with 3 monitors. I am training a new recruit in June for one of the trails with only one monitor

7. I have had equal success with recruiting volunteers to manage the 8 HNWTA doggie poop bag dispensers. I have 7 volunteers that fill the 8 boxes as needed, all but one volunteers are also trail monitors.

My goal for 2024 is to spend more time analyzing the information collected from the online reports looking for trends. I also want to establish a stronger liaison with the supervisor of trails for HRM with regards to erosion and tree removal issues.

Discussion ensued regarding multi use trails. More will be discussed at the next board meeting.

Halifax Field Naturalists Guided Walks. Jessica Boyd took a small group of people on a guided walk around the Mainland Common Loop Trail on Aug 22, 2022. Another walk is planned for this June 17th, 2023 at Belcher’s Marsh.

Memorial Benches. We remembered two good friends with memorial benches this year. One bench was installed near the Heart-shaped Pond in Hemlock Ravine Park in memory of David Putnam, the other was installed on the Belcher’s Marsh trail overlooking the pond in memory of Bob McDonald. Family and friends attended two lovely and intimate dedication ceremonies. Please visit these benches and sit awhile, we think they represent the best of our trails and our members.

If you would like to see more benches installed in the area, let us know where and consider donating through our website. Many of you have already donated this way and we are thankful.

Volunteer appreciation- On February 23, 2023, we hosted a volunteer appreciation dinner at Trinity Anglican Church which was attended by 29 people. Volunteers appreciated the opportunity to get together and talk with each other and Board members about trail issues. Thanks very much to Sharon Gibson and Jessica Boyd for their assistance in making this an enjoyable and successful event. We were pleased to welcome Councillor Pam Lovelace and MLA Rafah DiCostanzo to this event.

Communications. Our communications have been spotty this year with the departure of Alyssa, but we will try to keep sending our Newsletters as regularly as we can. Alexx Wells manages our Social Media accounts (Facebook and Twitter) very well. Alexx, Elaine and Jessica have now been trained to make simple changes and updates on our webpage.

Item 6 Nominating Committee Report

6a The following are presented as the slate of Board Candidates for 2022-2023

Linda Adamson
Jessica Boyd
Tony Cranford
Spencer Doué
Michelle Labossiere
Jane MacKay-Nesbitt
Elaine Perrott
Joshua Cranford

6 b The following are presented as Board Officers for 2023-2024: (vote required)

Jessica Boyd – Chair
Spencer Doué – Treasurer Secretary
Elaine Perrott – Recording and Corporate Secretary
Bob Manzera put forth a motion to accept the slate for Board Officers, seconded by Jane Mackay Nesbitt, approved by all.

Guest Speaker: 7:51 – 8:22pm

The Amazing Beaver: Ecosystem Engineer -- by Dr. Susan Meek

I have been teaching ecology and other biology courses at Saint Mary's University for the past 20 years. I have a PhD from Queen's University, and Masters and Bachelor of Science degrees from Acadia University. I am a Behavioural Ecologist, which is a branch of ecology that looks at how and why animals behave the way they do. I have conducted studies on damselflies, eastern bluebirds, cliff swallows, hummingbirds, and white throated sparrows.

I have been living in Clayton Park for almost 25 years and have enjoyed walking the trails and observing the wildlife with my family and our beagle, Cookie.

In this talk I will describe the ecology of beavers and discuss the important role beavers play in the ecosystem.

Dr. Meeks talk was enjoyed by all, and she was asked many follow up questions.