

Halifax North West Trails Association
Annual General Meeting
Thursday 23 May 2024
Trinity Anglican Church, 321 Main Street, Halifax

A G E N D A

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

Refreshments will be available

Walk. 6:30 – 7:00

Join us for a short (1 km) walk on Mainland North Trail and Loop trail. (Flat, easy)

Business Meeting 7:00 – 7:30

1. Welcome, Call to Order
2. Acknowledgement of Mi'kma'ki territory
3. Approval of agenda
4. Minutes of previous AGM May 18, 2023 (attached)
 - a. Changes and approval
 - b. Business arising from minutes
5. Committee Reports for 2023-2024 (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. Communications/Newsletter

Jessica Boyd
Michelle Labossiere
Tony Cranford
Jane McKay-Nesbitt
Linda Adamson
Joshua Cranford
6. Nominating Committee Report for 2023-2024 (see attached)
 - a. Board of Directors
 - b. Officers Vote required
7. Roundtable Discussions 7:30 – 8:00
 - a. Two questions will be asked of the attendees
 - b. Discussions to take place
 - c. Written summaries will be placed on boards for all to view
8. Adjournment

Item 5a Chair's Report

Jessica Boyd

It is a real pleasure to be here to see you all in person. Thank you to the Trinity Anglican Church, Linda Adamson, Jane MacKay-Nesbitt and Elaine Perrot for all you did to organize this event.

Board of Directors:

- I wish to thank the members of your Board of Directors for their dedication and hard work. We continue to meet monthly, this year as in the past three, we have met online. Your board of directors are an amazing group of people who are a real pleasure to work with. They show up with good ideas, good solutions, and good cheer every month.
- Last year Josh Cranford joined our board of directors. He has taken on the task of composing and mailing our newsletter every month. If you haven't seen it in your inbox yet, take the time to give us your address, you won't be disappointed. Thank you Josh.
- This past February Michelle Labossière took over the Treasurer's position, which had been vacant for a few months. Michelle has many years experience in financial procedures of organizations such as ours and has already made some key changes that will make our operation run more smoothly. Thank you Michelle.
- Sadly, this year is the last for our Secretary Elaine Perrot. She has decided to focus her time and considerable talents to other projects closer to her new home in the Windsor area. We will miss seeing you and working with you Elaine.
- Elaine's departure means we are in desperate need of a new secretary. Please consider this position, it will give you a genuine opportunity to give back to your community, to do good and practical work for the benefit of the Halifax North West area. Please reach out to me if you would like join us.

Funding:

- **HRM.** This past year, 2023-2024, we applied for, received, and spent \$5,000.00 in Recreational Trail Maintenance and Operational funding from HRM Parks and Recreation. We applied for the same amount this spring for the upcoming 2024-2025 fiscal year. This funding pays for the bulk of the work we do, and we are grateful for HRM for trusting us with it.
- **Membership and donations.** This year we received over \$800 in donations and membership fees. Thank you to all who contributed. I want to assure you that we are using your money wisely and in the best interest of your neighborhood trails.
- **Capital Recreational Trail Grant.** In 2020 we were awarded \$50,000 to build 2 km of new trails in the Mainland Commons park. I am happy to say we have been able to spend some of this money this year.

Projects:

- **"On Your Left!"** We held a Bicycle Safety event on May 20, 2023. We set up a table on the MNT near the Westridge crossing and talked to bike riders and pedestrians to educate them about the safe way to share the trail. We gave out bicycle bells and reflectors to about 40 people over the 2 hours of the event.

- **Updated Brochure** We are in the process of updating our brochure with new details. We are working with the Geomatics group at St. Mary's University to create a new map. We are working with a local designer Jocelyn Spence, to put the new map and updated information into a gorgeous and helpful setting.

Lowlight: Last July's series of extreme "training" thunder storms affected our trails like no other event. Throughout our area trails were rutted and washed out, culverts were exposed, and trees blown down. Belchers Marsh dam was blocked by debris resulting in flooding of the trail for weeks. The efforts of trail monitors to document and report the damage made the difficult job of repair work easier for the Parks and Recreation crews.

These types of weather events will become more and more common because of climate change. We need to learn to expect them and to respond to them effectively. The bulk of this work will fall on our Trail Monitors, I know you can handle it.

Highlights: You might be aware that we have been planning a series of extending loops to the Mainland Commons Loop trail. When finished, this system will open up the Mainland Common Park to more users and at the same time protect this delicate remnant of Acadian Forest. The project has been stalled for the past 3 years for many reasons, but this spring our Maintenance Lead, Tony Cranford has begun the project. He is starting with a 200 m section that will connect the existing trail to a new trailhead at the BMO Soccer Centre parking lot on Thomas Raddall Dr.

You will see the new trail growing in length throughout the summer. If you want to be a part of this project let us know. We need strong arms and backs to transport tonnes of gravel from the Westridge parking lot to the new section.

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

Support from other organizations: 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.

Many local politicians of all political parties and levels have helped with funding, information, and influence. We thank you for your support.

I will let the rest of our directors talk about their own reports.

Thank you all for letting me serve you as Chair of the HNWTA.

Item 5b Treasurer's Report

Michelle Labossière

HNWTA: 2023-2024 Financial Report		
BANK BALANCE APRIL 1 2023		\$ 22,374.69
INCOME:		
Memberships	425.70	
Donations	443.05	
Maintenance Grant - HRM	5,000.00	
Events Grant - HRM	-	
Other Income	-	
TOTAL INCOME		5,868.75
EXPENDITURES:		
Insurance	780.00	Acera \$200; NSTF \$580
Office Supplies	-	
Courier/Postage (mailbox rental)	169.28	mailbox rental \$165
Computer Software/Licenses	79.00	Microsoft Treasurer
Website	500.00	ImmediaC
Memberships (NSTF, RJSC, NSEN, Hike NS)	321.15	
Maintenance Equipment/Storage	1,638.23	Metro Storage
Maintenance Materials	1,307.34	Misc for trail maintenance
Cleaning/Sanitary Supplies (inc doggie bags)	682.91	Practica doggy bags banner logo design and banner
Marketing	200.00	
Training/Education	-	
Other:		
Volunteer Appreciation Event	72.90	door prizes
Honorariums	200.00	AGM 2023 speaker
Bicycle Event	157.02	
AGM admin expenses	200.00	AGM 2024 hall rental
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		6,307.83
TOTAL HST PAID		711.29
BANK BALANCE MARCH 31 2024		21,224.32

Item 5c Maintenance Report

Tony Cranford

This report contains highlights of this past year's activities related to volunteer work party maintenance work carried out on the trails in the area. The total volunteer maintenance work party hours worked was 500 hours during this time period. The focus of the work was on the Mainland Common Loop trail and the Old Coach Road trail. Plus, there was other work carried out on many of the other trails. In January 2024 work began on the new Common Loop extension trail formalization project. This involves a 200- metre section of informal paths to widen / improve and formalize to connect the existing Loop trail to Thomas Raddell Drive with a new trailhead entrance. The plan is to get this 200- metre section completed and useable by end of January 2025. The bulk of work here is to cut low brush shrubbery to form a trail 54 inches wide and install layers of rock and mixed gravel to make the existing narrow paths wider and with a better surface for walking.

The biggest single events and best attended were the two wood chips spreading events that were carried out in June and again in the Fall of 2023 at the Mainland Common Loop trail. Other notable activities were spreading gravel and rock on some of the trails after rain events such as Old Coach Road trail sections and at the Fairview end of Loop trail to improve drainage and raise the trail elevation. From July 2023 until March 2024 there were many instances where heavy rains caused washouts and higher water levels so drainage was installed and gravel and rock placed to put various trails in good order.

Also, much new wood was installed on trail structures to replace rotten planks and railings. Work at other trail locations included installing more drainage and trimming of trees, limbs and cleanup of tree damage from windstorms. Including Hemlock Ravine and Belchers Marsh and other trails in the area. Also signs and new posts were installed at Loop bog lookoff and fallen trees removed from trails at Belchers Marsh and limbs removed from large fallen trees on trails at Hemlock Ravine. Spent considerable funds on building materials including much new wood, drainage piping and safety walk material and metal fence wire. Some experimental work was done including installing non -slip materials on some of the wooden walk surfaces on various trails and protecting birch trees from beaver activity by installing metal cages around clumps of birch trees at the Belcher's Marsh trails area.

Completed work included maintenance on Mainland Common loop trails, Old Coach Road trail and other trails where regular maintenance items such as replacing rotten wood with new wood and replacing washout areas with gravel and rock were carried out. Old Coach Road trails had some new wood installed on the walkway bridge and several places on multiple occasions gravel and rock had to be placed to fill deep ruts and washouts from heavy rains from July to December 2023.

From January to end March 2024 and continuing at present is the work on Loop extension trail to widen trails by cutting and removing the low brush shrubbery and trimming tree limbs and chainsaw cutting and removing some larger trees. The plan going forward is to continue this work and also to install a layer of rock and another top layer of mixed gravel to make the widened trails more walkable. There are some deep cavities in existing terrain to fill. The goal is

to make this new trail section a category 3 rating or comparable to the existing Common Loop trail quality.

Going forward expect expenses for regular maintenance to be about 3K for the upcoming year. And for the new trail extension expect we can use about 5K from the special grant money dedicated for this purpose. The new section will require a lot of gravel and rock to be procured and placed.

Activities in recent times from 1 April to 30 April 2024 included the spring cleanup at Belchers Marsh and continuing work on the Loop to replace wooden planks with new wood such as the bog lookoff platform and new loop extension trail widening and brush cutting.

The general condition of the trails overall is good with trails safe for usage. Regular 311 reporting by the trail monitors is also effective is getting response from HRM staff to remedy the reported problems.

We continue to have good rapport with the Halifax Parks and Recreation folks for assistance with providing free wood chips, and in receiving advice and in getting the 311 calls responded to.

Going forward the main area of concern relates to fire safety. The loop and especially the new loop extension trail continue to have folks use these areas as a place to go and have campfires. Some of which are not always extinguished fully. Part of the new trail extension will have new HNWTA signage placed near Thomas Raddell drive new trailhead entrance. Going forward suggest we need to incorporate more fire safety education and signage at the Loop, and Loop extension and other trail locations as our urban forests/ trails are being used by more people, including those who are either not educated or informed about fire safety in wooded areas.

Tony Cranford

Maintenance Coordinator

Item 5d HNWTA Membership Committee

Jane McKay-Nesbitt

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

Committee members: HNWTA Board is seeking new members for this committee.

Membership numbers: As of May 23, 2024, there are 116 paid up members and 23 memberships are up for renewal.

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

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.

Respectfully submitted:

Jane McKay-Nesbitt, Chair

Item 5e Trail Stewardship Report

Linda Adamson

1. Currently we have 22 trained trail monitors inspecting 11 trails and trail sections. Four new monitors were trained in the last fiscal year. There are two monitors on every trail except one which has only one monitor. Hemlock Ravine Trail has three monitors.

2. I have seven volunteers filling and monitoring our eight doggie poop bag boxes.

3. There were 143 inspection reports submitted from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024.

Common issues reported were:

- Icy areas during winter mainly on sections of the Mainland Trail
- Litter especially full doggie poop bags. A common issue on Hemlock Ravine trails
- Erosion and lack of garbage can on the Geiser Hill trail that remains unresolved.
- Cigarette butts on several of the trail entrances.
- Need for signage to state trails are smoke free
- Trees and tree limbs down and across trails. All issues have been resolved
- One case of vandalism to rocks IE painted with slogan

- Dumping of debris from felled and cut up tree neighbouring the Southgate entrance to the Old Coach Trail. Resolved by HRM.
- Damage to signage from weather over time. Reported to 311
- Damage from weather and aging to several wooden benches and bridge decks. Repaired by Tony Cranford or HRM.
- Damage to hinges on city garbage can lids on Mainland trail section B

4. All our trails were considerably damaged by the late July, 2023 flood. The trail monitors got out immediately and documented the damage with photographs for HRM staff. All trails were repaired by the end of August, 2023. It showed to all of us how important our trail monitors are in being “boots on the ground” and informing HRM staff of damage to trails and continuing to do so until the issues are resolved.

5. I set up a zoom meeting with all monitors, November 22, 2023 to discuss common issues:

- Seven monitors attended representing seven different trails
- the need for HRM to post “smoke free” signage on trails
- the need for a shared map of all our trails that could be used by 311 operators and us to locate site of issues we report.
- Identification and reporting of Hemlock Wooley Adelgid on our trails

My goal for 2025 is to analysis the monitors comments from submitted inspection reports more regularly and respond as needed.

I want to thank the monitors for their many volunteer hours ensuring our trails remain in excellent condition for all to enjoy. You do an amazing job.

Linda Adamson, Coordinator.

Item 5f Communications / Newsletter

Joshua Cranford

We have sent out 7 monthly newsletters since October 2023. We currently have 472 active subscribers. The primary focus of the newsletters has been informing people of events upcoming next month and showcasing trail work done by our association.