

Guest Speaker

Jillian Ramsay

6:45-7:15

Sustainable Cities Coordinator Ecology Action Centre

I work with the Built Environment Team to help shape greener, more livable communities by advancing sustainable planning policy, advocating for the protection and expansion of the HRM's Greenbelt and coordinating Our HRM Alliance.

Originally from Toronto, I moved to Halifax in 2014 for school. Having completed my Master's in Resource and Environmental Management at Dalhousie in 2023, I have no plans to leave! I love how accessible the HRM's high-quality blue, green and open spaces are - many just a 20-minute drive from downtown. Outside of work, you'll usually find me off-trail with a field guide or volunteering at the Grainery Food Co-op.

In Attendance:

Barb Bennett	Jessica Boyd	Claudine Cranford	Joshua Cranford
Tony Cranford	Tripta Devichand	Elizabeth Domondon	Moonhei Gye
Nancy Jennings	Maureen Manuge	Bob Manzer	Shirley McIntyre
Susan McLean	Audrey Peake	Jillian Ramsay	Jeffrey Roy
Chris Tabone			

Item 4 Jessica Boyd put forth a Motion for approval of Minutes from the 2024 AGM. The Motion was seconded by Bob Manzer and was approved unanimously.

Item 5 b Jessica Boyd put forth a Motion for the Interim Treasurer's Report to be approved. The Motion was seconded by Susan McLean and was approved unanimously. There was some discussion about the need for a new Treasurer. Jessica outlined the responsibilities involved in the position.

Item 6 a Jessica Boyd identified the proposed 2025-2026 Board of Directors and asked for a Motion to approve; the list included one nomination from the floor, **Elizabeth Eustaquio-Domondon**. The Motion was moved by Bob Manzer, seconded by Shirley McIntyre, and was approved unanimously.

Item 6 b. Jessica Boyd identified the proposed 2025-2026 Officers and asked for a Motion to approve. The Motion was moved by Chris Tabone, seconded by Bob Manzer, and was approved unanimously.

Guest Speaker: Jillian Ramsay from the Ecology Action Centre.

Her topic was "Sandy Lake – Sackville River Regional park Coalition Update."

Item 8. Adjournment – Jessica Boyd adjourned the meeting at 7:40PM.

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, and Josh Cranford for all you have done to organize this event

Board of Directors:

- I wish to thank the members of your Board of Directors for their dedication and hard work. I am truly amazed at the effort these people put into making HNWTa a success.
- Michelle Labossière served as our Treasurer for the past year. She made many important changes to our procedures to make it easier for us to generate the reports we need. But now she has retired from the board. Thank you Michelle for your service. I am serving as interim Treasurer, but I cannot do it for long.
- With Michelle leaving, we are down to a board of directors of only 6 people. With 5 required for quorum, this low number often leaves us unable to pass motions or do the work so many of you expect from us. Accordingly, my plan for 2025-2026 is to scale down our operations, to focus on recruitment and trail construction.

Funding

- This past year, 2024-2025, we applied for, received, and spent \$4,788.00 in Recreational Trails Operations and Maintenance Grant from HRM Parks and Recreation. We underspent our grant by \$212 in the previous year, so this amount was deducted from the 2024 award. We applied for \$5,000 this spring for the upcoming 2025-2026 fiscal year. This funding pays for the bulk of the work we do, and we are grateful for HRM for trusting us with it.

Projects:

- **Updated Brochure** We are continuing the process of updating our brochure with new details. Our new map produced by Will Flanagan of SMU Geography is complete and our designer Jocelyn Spence is putting the finishing touches to the rest of the brochure. Printing of the brochure will be paid for by an Active Transportation Education and Promotions grant for \$1,000 which we already have in our account.

Highlights:

- **New Trail Construction** This past January we celebrated the opening of 300 m of new recreational trail in the Mainland Common Park. The physical labour was all volunteer. I cannot thank you enough for this beautiful addition our trail system.

The cost of materials (mostly gravel and other aggregate) for this section was \$4,695.39. This cost is covered by our Capital Recreational Trail Grant.

We are now planning Phase 2 of this system, which we expect to complete this summer and fall. This 500 m interior loop with connections to both the new trail and existing wood chip surface trail will be completed by contracted labour, not volunteers. We are currently requesting and assessing bids for the work. For details of the trail network plan, please see our website, or come for a walk with us.

- **New Trail Adoptions.** As requested during the 2024 AGM, we have adopted the Mary Clayton Memorial Park and Trail into our system of trails. We now have monitors that patrol the trail regularly, the trail will be included in our new brochure and updated information about the park and trail are on our website.

We have also adopted the Kearney Lake Dam Trail system. This lovely system of trails at the north end of Kearney Lake will appear on the brochure and website. We have added signage and two new dog waste bag dispensers. I would like to thank Dave Murphy, a resident of the area, for all his work over the past many years. The benches and gazebo were funded and installed due to his tremendous efforts.

Lowlights: Despite the success and popularity of the new trail, HRM Parks and Recreation is looking at this trailhead site for a new, very large, Pickleball facility. Tony Cranford and I spoke against this proposal at a meeting of the HRM Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee on April 17, 2025 (you can watch the proceedings on the HRM council website). We will continue to oppose any encroachment into the Mainland Common Park.

Support for other organizations We continue to support the Sandy Lake - Sackville River Coalition whose parkland is slated for a housing development. We also support the wonderful efforts of the Friends of BMBCL wilderness area in their goal to make this area an Urban National Park.

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 reports.

Item 5b Treasurer's Report

Jessica Boyd (Interim Treasurer)

BANK BALANCE APRIL 1 2024		\$ 21,224.32	
INCOME:			Details
Memberships	\$ 350.00		
Donations			
Maintenance Grant - HRM	\$ 4,788.00		\$212 deducted, underspent in 2023-24
Education & Promotions - HRM	\$ 1,000.00		for brochure printing
Other Income			
TOTAL INCOME		\$ 6,138.00	
EXPENDITURES:			
Insurance	\$ 772.00		Acera \$200; NSTF \$572
Memberships (NSTF, RJSC, NSEN, Hike NS)	\$ 383.01		
Training/Education	\$ 210.95		Lanyards for Monitors
Office Supplies	\$ 100.00		Staples Copy card
Courier/Postage	\$ 246.22		mailbox rental \$224.25
Computer Software/Licenses			
Website	\$ 287.50		ImmediaC
Maintenance Equipment/Storage	\$ 1,569.02		Metro Storage
Maintenance Materials	\$ 867.82		Misc for trail maintenance
Materials for Recreational Trail Build	\$ 4,695.39		Rocks, aggregate
Cleaning/Sanitary Supplies	\$ 1,065.54		Practica dog bags and dispensers
Marketing			
Other:	\$ 431.66		AGM rental /work party snacks / etc
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$ 10,629.11	
BANK BALANCE MARCH 31 2025		\$ 16,733.21	

Fiscal Year April1, 2024 to March 31, 2025 - The Year in Review

This report highlights the past year's activities related to volunteer work party maintenance work carried out on the trails, parks, and waterways in the area. The total volunteer work party hours worked on regular maintenance was 1000 hours. And also another 800 hours were worked on the new trail construction phase one extension of common loop trail project. We took on a new trail by adding the Kearney Lake Dam trail to our list of trails that we perform repairs work on. We have done several jobs on this trail already. The biggest single project was the completion of the construction of our new trail: the Mainland Common Loop extension phase one which took a full calendar year to finish by a small group of volunteers carrying out hard physical labour. A ceremony was held to officially open phase one newly constructed trail 26 January 2025.

The other large events were multiple days in the Spring and Fall of 2024 to carry out wood chips spreading on the Common loop trails. We had large deliveries both times requiring multiple workdays to spread all the wood chips. We also have a large well-attended Spring cleanup at Belchers Marsh areas where over 320 pounds of garbage was collected.

The usual repairs of replacing rotten planks on the many wooden structures was carried out on several trails. Litter was removed from all the sites at various times by smaller groups of volunteers on an ongoing basis. The theme this past year has been picking up litter and the remains of tents and camping gear left behind by homeless folks who relocated. This is still an ongoing issue with items in all the parks and trail areas still to be picked up. The place where we picked up most garbage items was on the edges of Hemlock Ravine Park and some near Fairview end of Common Loop trails and more in Kearney Lake areas. Took part in wire mesh cage work to protect trees at Belchers Marsh, and a lot of cleanups of wood and fallen trees from trail edges and walk areas in various trails and parks. Recently some beavers were relocated so this loss of trees on Belchers trails should subside for a while.

In recent weeks we are again engaged in spreading wood chips on the Loop trails plus we also just completed another spring cleanup at the Belchers Marsh areas. Also, in April 2025 some volunteers joined the Chair at City hall to give a presentation to council and staff about our opposition to any developments on passive lands surrounding the common loop. Our message was to keep the loop trail lands fully intact "as is" in its existing forested state .

Our next big project is to tackle phase two loop extension new trail construction. This is a goal at this point, to get another 480 metres of trail constructed/ formalized by Dec 31, 2025. The trails are in generally good condition and anticipate we will continue to have work party events for wood chips spreading and cleanups of trails areas.

Item 5 d 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 15, 2025, there are 80 paid up members and 40 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 5 e Trail Stewardship Annual Report

Linda Adamson: Coordinator.

1. Currently we have 21 trail monitors inspecting 12 trails and 7 monitors filling our 10 doggie poop bag dispensing boxes.
2. During the fiscal year, there were 4 newly trained trail monitors and 5 monitors who retired.
3. There was a total of 138 inspections completed which generated 28 reported incidents to Halifax 311 service. Common reported incidents were:
 - Trees down or leaning, resulting in hazard to trail use
 - Garbage bins damaged or overflowing
 - Litter including cigarette butts
 - Request for no smoking signs
 - Trail erosion
 - Trail sink hole
 - Benches vandalized
 - Need for doggie bag boxes to be filled
4. There was a Zoom meeting of monitors February 18, 2025, to discuss any issues they had about the inspection and reporting process. 7 monitors attended. Excellent discussion ensued. Issues raised were:
 - Problems with 311 service. Some monitors feel that the service seems one sided in that when an issue is submitted and 311 resolves the issue within 2 weeks it works for them but it does not when an issue is submitted it doesn't get resolved and the monitor does not get an explanation for why it is unresolved. It is time consuming for the monitor to continue to contact 311 directly or through the 311 website using the incident reference number to establish the incident status.
 - Several monitors reported the litter of cigarette butts at trail heads and on the trails. There was discussion of the possibility of having no smoking signs at all trailheads.
5. Linda A. was able to make connections with two HRM trails and spaces supervisors with parks/ parks and rec. They have been able to answer some of our concerns about the 311 service and confusion around doggie bag box ownership and filling. We now have contacts that we can access when a monitor issue arises.
6. Trail monitor badges were made and distributed to monitors. They are to be worn when doing trail inspections or when walking their respective trails. The hope is that trail users will ask more questions about our roles as trail monitors and about HNWTA.

I want to thank all the trail monitors for the excellent job they have done over the past year. It is because of their volunteering/commitment that our trails remain clean, walkable, safe and accessible for citizens of all ages and abilities. Well done all.

Item 5 f Newsletter Annual Report –**Joshua Cranford**

The HNMTA newsletter is a monthly informational bulletin sent out to 454 subscribers. The primary focus of the newsletters is informing people of upcoming events. These are both activities organized by the HNMTA and those put on by other groups that are relevant to the environmental and recreation focus of our association. Additionally, it showcases trail work and advocacy that we have done, as well as pictures from last month's events. At the end there's also the Species of the Month that displays a picture of flora or fauna taken along one of our managed trails that month which serves to showcase that value to conservation that these forested areas provide.

Item 6a Nominations for Board of Directors

The following are presented as the Slate of Board Candidates for 2025-2026.

- Linda Adamson
- Jessica Boyd
- Tony Cranford
- Joshua Cranford
- Jane McKay-Nesbitt
- Jeffrey Roy

Item 6b Appointment of Officers

The following are recommended as the Slate of Board Officers for 2025-2026

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|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| • Linda Adamson | Corporate Secretary |
| • Jessica Boyd | Chair and Interim Treasurer |
| • Jeffrey Roy | Recording Secretary |