

**Halifax North West Trails Association
Annual General Meeting
6 July, 2020 via “Google Meet”
Business meeting 7:00 – 7:30
Photo Contest Winners 7:30**

A G E N D A

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Announcements
2. Additions to and approval of agenda (vote required)
3. Minutes of previous AGM May 6, 2019 (see 2019 folder)
 - a. Changes and approval (vote required)
 - b. Business arising from minutes
4. Committee Reports for 2019-2020 (see attached)
 - a. Chair’s Report Jessica Boyd
 - b. Treasurer’s Report (vote required) Frank Gibson
 - c. Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA) Report Mike Basford
 - d. Maintenance Committee Report Frank Gibson
 - e. Events Committee Report Sharon Gibson
 - f. Membership Committee Report Sharon Gibson
 - g. Communications Committee Report Alyssa Doué
 - h. Trail Monitoring Program Report Spencer Doué
 - i. Advocacy & Outreach Committee Report Wendy McDonald
 - j. Friends of BMBCL Report James Boyer
5. Presentation of Board Members and Officers and call for new Board Members for 2020-2021
(votes required)
6. New Business
7. Announcement of Photo Contest Winners
8. Adjournment

**Halifax North West Trails Association
Annual General Meeting
6 July, 2020 via “Google Meet”**

MINUTES

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Announcements

HNWTA Chair Jessica Boyd called the meeting to order. In addition to the HNWTA Board members, 22 HNWTA members are present. Jessica began the meeting by thanking Paul Berry for a land acknowledgement proposal, and presented acknowledgement, that the meeting is taking place on unceded Mi'kmaq territory.

2. Additions to and approval of agenda

No additions or changes proposed.

Motion that the agenda be approved: Jessica Boyd.

Seconded: Paul Berry.

Approved

3. Minutes of previous AGM May 6, 2019 were shared on Google Drive

a. Changes and approval

No changes proposed

Motion that the minutes be accepted as written: Jessica Boyd

Seconded: Charles Lienaux

Approved

b. Business arising from minutes

Paul Berry requested clarification on how to pay membership dues. Sharon Gibson replied that cash or cheque can be sent to her address. HNWTA does not yet have the ability to accept online payment.

4. Committee Reports for 2019-2020 (see pages 3-11)

4a Chair's Report.

This is certainly not the kind of meeting I imagined we would hold this year. These are unprecedented times and we are dealing with unprecedented challenges. We mourn our friends and neighbours lost to Covid-19, and we mourn the loss of simple shared activities we used to take for granted. We treasure our trails even more now because so many other activities and forms of exercise are closed to us.

You should know that your association has not stopped working for you. We have adapted to the new situation by holding virtual meetings like this one. We have had to cancel group gatherings but have pivoted to individual trails activities like our first photo contest.

The leaders of the various committees have submitted their annual reports and I will let them describe their activities themselves. In this report I will simply highlight some of our accomplishments.

Board of Directors. Over the past year we have recruited a wonderful new board member, Jane McKay-Nesbitt. Jane immediately started to help organize events and uses her expertise in marketing to help focus our advertising campaigns. You have probably seen Jane around at some of our activities, so please say hello to her.

Sadly, this year we said goodbye to long-time board member and original Chair, Bob McDonald. Bob wants to spend more time walking the trails and less time in the board room, and who can blame him? I take comfort in knowing that he would not have left us if he did not think we could handle the responsibility and I know he is only a phone call away.

Membership. We are continuing our push to become more responsive to our neighbours, to encourage people to use our trails for all sorts of reasons. We now have over 100 paid members who benefit by having a first chance to sign up for crowded guided hikes and other events. We have over 400 other people on our mailing list, we have over 30 trail monitors who commit to walking a section of a trail regularly to check the status of the trails and to report problems. We also have a core group of 20 or so people we can call on for physical labour such as trail resurfacing and garbage clean-up.

Last June we organized our first Community Foot Prints event with Dave Putnam owner of the Foot Solutions store at Farnham Gate. This event brought together businesses and environmental organizations to show people how to get the most enjoyment out of our wooded areas. We have had to postpone this year's event until the fall, so stay tuned for more information.

Trail Construction. The HRM budget has taken a hit with pandemic related costs which means that some of our requested funding has been delayed and we may get less funding than we asked for. However, these three large construction projects are in various stages of planning:

1. Mainland North Trail extension: \$100,000 approved in 2019-2020 budget for planning. This project is still in the planning stages at the HRM Department of Transportation and Public Works.
2. Fleetview Trail extension: \$50,000 approved in 2020-2021 budget for planning. This project is still in the planning stages at the HRM Department of Transportation and Public Works.
3. Mainland Commons Recreational Trail extension, construction of trail surface and trail amenities: \$50,000 approved in 2020-2021 from HRM Parks and Recreation. Other funds

for this large project are: District 12 Councillor Richard Zurawski \$10,000; NS Community Culture and Heritage (\$4,000), NS Health Authority (\$2,000). We plan on beginning some work on this system this summer.

We will not be submitting any further large capital grants in the next couple of years but will instead focus on keeping these projects moving forwards.

Operational Funding. Other than these large grants we are grateful to receive regular operating and trails maintenance funds from HRM (\$3,000); NS Community Culture and Heritage, (\$1,000); a Re-Capitalization grant from HRM to update and replace the large sign at our kiosk (\$1,500); an Employment and Social Development Canada Grant “New Horizons for Seniors” (\$4,400); and a TD Parks People Grant (\$2,000) for fun activities.

We also worked with a group of residents headed by Dave Murphy from the Kearney Lake area to install benches and a picnic table near Kearney Run. This project was funded through a generous grant from HRM District 16 Councillor Tim Outhitt and some other local fundraising efforts.

This is a lot of grant writing and is a lot to keep track of. Every member of your board has contributed in some way to this endeavor. I want to thank every board member for taking the time to manage these often tedious tasks.

Support for other organizations: We continue to support two local green initiatives with advocacy efforts: Sandy Lake – Sackville River Regional Park Coalition and the Friends of Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Society. I encourage you to look into these two organizations and to support them as well.

4b. Treasurer's Report

Frank Gibson

BANK BALANCE April 1 2019	\$ 16,971.64
INCOME:	
Trail Metre Sales	
Membership	\$ 1,505.00
Donations	\$ 200.00
Maintenance - HRM	\$ 3,240.00
Maintenance - Province	\$ 1,000.00
HRTA Meeting	\$ 525.03
Common Loop Extension	\$ 21,005.90
Kearney Dam Project	\$ 6,250.00
New Horizons for Seniors Grant	\$ 4,400.00
TD Parks Project	\$ 2,000.00
Other Income	\$ 827.99
Current Liabilities	
TOTAL INCOME:	\$ 40,953.92
EXPENDITURES:	
Insurances:	\$ 712.18
Office	\$ 155.98
Website	\$ 632.50
Membership (NSTF, RJSC)	\$ 311.15
Maintenance Tools/supplies	\$ 389.75
Maintenance Materials	\$ 1,361.32
Meetings/travel/tolls/workshops/events	\$ 460.42
Printing	\$ 312.06
HRTA Meeting	\$ 525.55
Common Loop Extension	\$ 12,535.00
Kearney Dam Project	\$ 6,261.27
TD Parks Project	\$ 2,000.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 3,354.48
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 29,011.66
INCOME MINUS EXPENDITURES	\$ 11,942.26
BANK BALANCE March 31, 2020	\$ 28,913.90

Moved that the Treasurer's Report be approved as presented: Frank Gibson
 Seconded: Mohammad Ehsan
Approved.

4c. Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA) Report

Mike Basford

As of 2019, HRTA's objectives are to support only member groups that are involved in "human powered / active transportation (AT), recreation trails and greenways" (with three groups with a trail allowing ATVs grand-fathered in).

An objective of HRTA over the past three years, to obtain regular capital funding for "Recreational trails", meaning not "Active Transportation" (AT, like our Mainland North Trail) seemed about to succeed when Covid-19 impacted the city's '20-'21 budget. (Our Mainland Common trail was awarded \$50,000). Two other projects for other Trails Associations were awarded funding as well.

HRTA brings together 24 volunteer trail groups with a diverse range of trail types and landscapes. HRTA is linked contractually to HRM, using a community development model. Under annual agreements, group proposals are screened, and some are funded.

Early in 2019 HRM Transportation staff initiated a process to develop an Administrative Order for trails that once approved would clarify roles and responsibilities and facilitate the city's approval process. Consultation with stakeholders followed.

City staff invited each HRTA group (not HRTA) to complete a long questionnaire as to objectives, roles, capabilities, responsibilities, obstacles, etc. HRTA members worked over the survey results in a series of facilitated Strategic Planning sessions in spring 2019.

As a result, HRTA set up committees tasked with the following priorities:

1. Recreational trails (formalizing the existing ad hoc committee) – annual capital funding
2. The human-powered/ non-motorized issue
3. Funding issues
4. A part-time paid staffer (co-ordinator /secretary).

Less progress has been made with the latter two.

HNWTA is represented in the HRTA board meetings (9 – 10 per year), one arranged by HNWTA in January, Maintenance Funding Committee (Jessica) and the Recreational Trails committee (Wendy).

Respectfully submitted Mike Basford

4d. Maintenance Committee Report

Frank Gibson

We maintain two trails: The Old Coach Road Trail and the Mainland Common Loop. We also participate lightly in the maintenance of several other Trails. We obtained funding and contracted the planning needed to develop and expand the Common loop trail to improve and increase access to the Mainland North Trail.

The Old Coach Road Trail has a 4 ft. wide crusher dust surface. There were two or three minor washes and one other that would get much worse if not attended to. On three different occasions, and forty-six volunteer hours, we restored the surface. Some areas were also bush-whacked to keep the trail clear, bridge boards were replaced and benches painted.

On the Common Loop we held two events where we spread wood chips. Seven cubic feet of

wood chips were spread, accumulating 109 volunteer hours. The volunteers also bush whacked to keep the trail clear.

We maintained doggie bag dispensers in six locations, this has been mostly taken over by our trail monitors.

Other maintenance work included cleaning up fallen trees and repairing a dislodged sign.

4e. Events Committee Report

Sharon Gibson

We enjoyed a fun filled and busy year, these are some of the highlights of the year. Beginning in April we participated in the iNaturalist Global Challenge.

The Annual General Meeting was held in May at the Keshen Goodman Library. The guest speaker, Kendra McKendry, gave a wonderful talk on the benefits of connecting with nature.

Also, in May eight board members attended Hike Nova Scotia's annual Hike Summit weekend held on the South Shore.

In partnership with our Sponsor, Foot Solutions, we hosted the first Annual Foot Prints event in June, bringing together a dozen like minded nature groups for a day of information sharing and fun for the whole community.

Throughout the Spring and Fall we led four wilderness hikes and several interpretive walks on our trails.

We held an online Art Auction with proceeds going to HNWTA, artwork, courtesy of local artist and member Edward Wedler. The auction was followed by a Plein Air Event at Hemlock Ravine, nine artists painted in the park on a sunny morning in September.

We partnered with Keshen Goodman Library to lead walks on Tuesdays in October. The Tuesday walks are a popular program at the library and this year we followed the walks with more social time and refreshments.

A walk and public engagement were held in October to look at plans and get input for the expansion of the Mainland Common Loop Trail.

The second annual Winter Tree for the Birds event drew more than seventy people on a cool November afternoon. Many of the participants were from the Nature based integration program coordinated through ISANS.

In January we hosted a Halifax Regional Trails Association meeting and later in the month held a Volunteer Dinner for our trail's volunteers.

Two snow shoeing events were planned with HRM Outdoor Recreation. They were planned for early March with the hope of snow.

We applied for and received two grants, one from TD Park People and One from Service Canada. These grants funded several programs.

4f. Membership Committee Report

Sharon Gibson

We called a membership meeting in May in the hopes of forming a committee. As a result of the meeting we decided to reach out to the local immigrant association and to families with young children. These two areas needed attention as they were underserved by our association.

Since then we made a connection with the local Immigrant Association and held three events during the year specifically for new-commers to Canada.

Two board members took part in Welcome Ambassador Training offered through ISANS in the interest of reaching out further to our diverse community.

Two board members took a leadership training course and in addition to leading hikes planned an event specifically for families with young children.

A few additional changes, we promoted the idea that membership fees be paid every three years instead of yearly, thanks to Alyssa who set up a data base that is easy to maintain and update, and we offered incentives like early registration for a few popular events. During the past year, our membership numbers have almost tripled and we are hopeful to continue the trend.

We currently have 117 members.

4g. Communications Committee Report

Alyssa Doué

This year was spent continuing to monitor HNWTA correspondences with the community, promoting events, and sharing ideas with members (through email, website updates, social media). These are the typical tasks that are completed multiple times per week. Monthly newsletters have also been sent out (excluding some quiet winter months) that keep subscribers up-to-date on events and information about the group.

A large project that was completed this year was the editing of the map and sign for the Kiosk display at the Canada Games Centre. The map on the current kiosk sign is old and outdated, so this needed to be edited for new streets and street names needed to be added in (thanks to Will Flanagan and Matthew Jaeschke for help with the map and editing it!). Along with other Board members, we updated the details of each trail, and new trails were added to the sign. When you are in the area, pop by to see how it looks! We will let you know once it's installed!

In addition to advertising events for HNWTA, I was helping lead hikes or supporting event leaders at some of our events. Monthly Board meetings were attended and discussions were had about improvements to the communications process. Work is still ongoing for these improvements as the way we interact with one another changes during the pandemic.

Here's to another great year!

Alyssa Doué, Communications Chairperson

4h. Trail Monitoring Program Report

Spencer Doué

The HNWTA Trail Monitoring program has had a very successful first season from when it started in April 2019 up until January 2020. We currently have 25 volunteers assigned to trails with the majority actively engaged, and two more potential new trail monitors. All have been submitting inspection reports via our website which makes it easy to save the files directly to our online HNWTA Google Drive. Trail Monitors continue to be active in notifying HRM 311 of issues and we have seen direct results from this in the form of hazard cleanups on trails, new signage, and remediation of other issues.

Four trail monitors (including two new ones) still need to be met with in-person to provide them with a hat and lanyard, though Covid-19 has made this difficult. This will be something to be completed hopefully before 2020 is over.

We currently have at least one trail monitor assigned to each trail and are currently looking for a second monitor for both Geizer Hill (which only has one assigned). Additionally, we are looking for another trail monitor for Hemlock Ravine as that is a large trail system.

In looking at some statistics for April 2019 to January 2020 (based on inspection reports submitted through our website, which comprises the vast majority), a total of 90 inspections were completed with 34 different instances of issues being reported to HRM 311. A breakdown of these figures and more by trail can be found in Appendix 1.

Overall, the program continues to go well and is largely self-functioning from an operation perspective. HNWTA is in regular contact with trail monitors and assists with any questions/comments that come up. It is expected that this program will continue to be successful in its mission of keeping an eye on the trails and reporting issues to 311, as well as promoting HNWTA to the public.

4i. Advocacy and Outreach Committee Report Wendy and Bob McDonald

The opportunity to engage members, community residents and decision makers has allowed our trails in the region to gain new and improved assets and recognition through dialogue, funding and on the ground events. New members are always welcome to help with outreach and advocacy. A summary of some of the main activities follow:

Fund raising. Funds were requested and received from the province (Communities, Culture & Heritage, NS Health Authority – Chebucto Community Health Board) and Municipality (District 12 Capital Funds) to assist with planning the development and rehabilitation of trails in the passive area of the Mainland Common as well as trail amenities.

Trail Planning. Ongoing interaction with 2 contractors and community engagement regarding the Mainland Common trail project. Submission to HRM Recreation and Parks Trail Fund. Mapping and Signage was identified as a gap for our 9 trails.

Partnerships. Members were engaged with new and continuing partners including Atlantic Water Network, Ducks Unlimited, Friends of Blue Mountain, ISANS, Our HRM Alliance (regarding the Green Network Plan and Regional Plan review), Keshen Goodman Library, Friends of Clayton Park, Hike NS and Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP). All

levels of government and elected officials have an interest, large or small, in our trails. The NS Community College provided a summer student, Izzy Clarke, who spent 12 weeks part time with us over the summer of 2019 assisting in several projects including water monitoring at Belchers Marsh, trail walks and stewardship. Engage Mainland North monthly meetings encourage interaction with other regional and local community groups and resources. NS Environmental Network Education Caucus is another group supporting our outreach efforts.

Community Engagement. As in past years we hosted many interpreted walks and nature observations including the International iNaturalist Nature Challenge on local trails and BMBCL. We are in discussion with Ducks Unlimited and two local schools (Halifax West High School and Park West School) regarding collaborative activities at the Mainland Common bog and Belchers Marsh.

Halifax Regional Trails (HRTA). Advocacy for HRM Recreation Trail funding, absent in recent years, through meetings with other engaged trails groups. HNWTA, one of over twenty volunteer trails associations, wrote letters and encouraged reinstatement of these funds.

NS Trails. I am one of 2 board members representing the Central region; I attend quarterly board meetings, I serve on the Membership Committee, attended launch of Trails strategy and new Trail Guide: <https://novascotiatrials.cioc.ca/>

Communications. Updates re Tourism promotion for HRM and NS as well as HRM Staff re gaps and opportunities. Revision of Kiosk and associated materials.

Wendy & Bob McDonald on behalf of the Board, June 2020

4j. Friends of Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Society Report

James Boyer

First and foremost, we wanted to thank HNWTA for partnering with Friends of BMBCLS and joining with other community groups regarding the unfortunate, temporary loss of a trail head at Maskwa. We have very limited trail access as it is so the loss of the Maskwa trail head was devastating news. Diana Whalen has been in touch with Chris Miller and Iain Rankin. Meetings have been held between Maskwa, Lands and Forestry, and Department of Environment. We believe we are well on our way to a positive solution largely because like-minded community groups came together to work towards a common cause. We appreciate HNWTA writing a letter in support of this significant community issue.

On a sad note, we lost one of BMBCL'S supporters this month when artist and activist Shelagh Duffett died suddenly due to a very aggressive form of pancreatic cancer. She had recently hosted a very successful WILD Exhibition at the Nova Scotia Public Archives' Chase Gallery in February 2020. Her goal was to help raise money for the Nova Scotia Nature Trust recent purchase of 'Blue Mountain connector lands' in the BMBCL proposed regional park.

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust, a charity dedicated to the protection of Nova Scotia's natural legacy through land conservation, signed a purchase and sale agreement in October, 2019 with the owners of a 560 acre parcel of land– *Blue Mountain Wilderness Connector* (map-yellow block). The block joins two separate sections of the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area.

This block represents a critically vulnerable gap where forestry operations and housing development would have significant negative impacts on the existing terrestrial and aquatic habitats. To acquire and save this block, the Nature Trust has launched its [Save the Wild Blue](#) campaign.

Recently, we have been exploring areas recently purchased by HRM and the Federal Government: the Barrett Lands and Armco Lands purchased in 2019 (see map at <https://www.bluemountainfriends.ca/maps>). The Barrett Lands contains a beautiful wetlands area although the close proximity of the #113 is a concern. The Armco Lands would make a good access point due to the existing logging road and large cleared area for parking. Furthermore, Saint Andrew's Church offers further parking facilities. <https://blthanglicans.ca>

It is important to note that this area (Armco) is also an important 'Canoe Trail head' or blue water trail, where canoes can be pulled out after travelling from Yankee Town through Flat Lake to Frasers Lake. Furthermore, there is access to Nine Mile River when the water is high in the spring.

Friends of BMBCLS has created a committee to plan to communicate with citizens who are planning on running in the upcoming municipal elections. A survey is being created to send out to potential councilors. We are planning on talking with the new candidates and ensuring they are up to date.

In other news, Councillor Richard Zurawski called for a plan to set up a regional park that would include the boundaries, the timeline for its creation and the potential sources of funding for both the setup and ongoing maintenance. Council unanimously approved the motion. Although this is a very positive step we still have much work to do. We hope to have monthly meetings with city staff regarding the follow up to these promises by the city.

The hike leadership development is continuing with First- Aid training, safety equipment purchases and hike location mapping. Lots going on!

Interesting facts:

- 2,200 hectares of reserve has been designated as a protected wilderness area by the province. However, the city still needs to purchase lands in the Susie Lakes area which is part of the Regional Plan.
- The reserve includes 22 lakes and according to the city, it is about 20 times the size of Point Pleasant Park.
- Rouge Valley Park in Toronto took 30 years to complete. Let's hope BMBCL Regional Park will be completed in more timely fashion
- If you haven't had a chance to become a member you can find information at www.bluemountainfriends.ca Once you become a member you will receive our free newsletter with all the up to date news and upcoming events.

Submitted by
James Boyer
Planning Committee
Friends of BMBCLS

5. Board members for 2020-2021

If you would like to volunteer with HNWTA in any capacity (board member, trail monitor, project leader, labourer) please email the Chair, Jessica Boyd at jessica.boyd24@gmail.com. She will walk you through the process and welcome you on board.

Nomination Report:

The following slate is presented for the Board for 2020-2021

Mike Basford
Jessica Boyd
Alyssa Doué
Spencer Doué
Frank Gibson
Sharon Gibson
Heather Leslie
Jane McKay-Nesbitt
Wendy McDonald

Put forward as officers for the upcoming year:

Jessica Boyd – Chair
Frank Gibson – Treasurer
Heather Leslie – Corporate Secretary

All present voted to approve the Board membership and officers as presented.

6. New Business

none

7. Announcement of Photo Contest Winners

This year, HNWTA was fortunate to receive a TD Parks People grant, which allowed us to sponsor a photo contest which drew out the wonderful photography talent of many of our trail users. The dedicated judges were Keith Vaughan, Bob McDonald (both retired professors) and Darlene Wright-Watters (creativewatters.com). They had the difficult decision of choosing the winners from over 434 photos submitted during the 2-week contest period.

Category	First prize	Location
Under 13	Camille Mantilla	Hemlock Ravine
Age 13-17	Zachary Fay	Mill Run Trail
Adult Landscape	Cheryl Gale	Belcher's Marsh
Adult Natural Flora	Nick Neklioudov	Belcher's Marsh
Adult Wildlife	Dan Liwski	Belcher's Marsh
Adult People Watching	Brenda Seymour	Mainland Common Loop

Congratulations to all of our winners, who each received a \$50 gift certificate from a local business, and congratulations and thanks to all of the entrants who shared with us the beautiful images which they captured on our HNWTA trails.

8. Adjournment

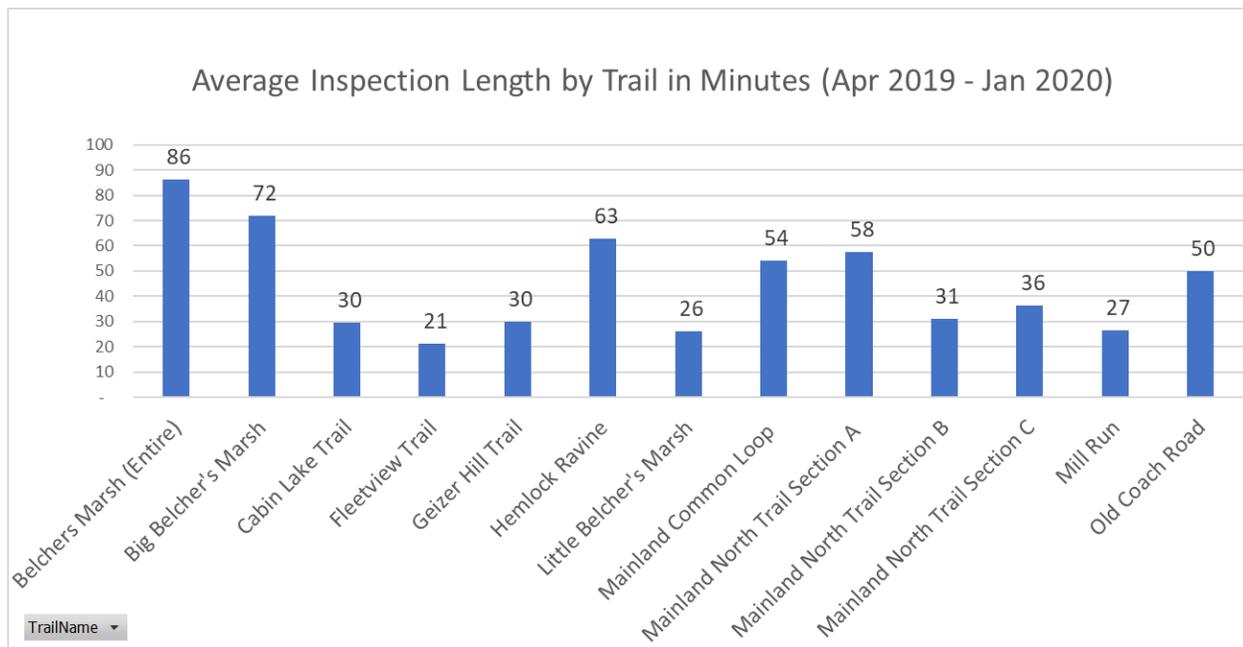
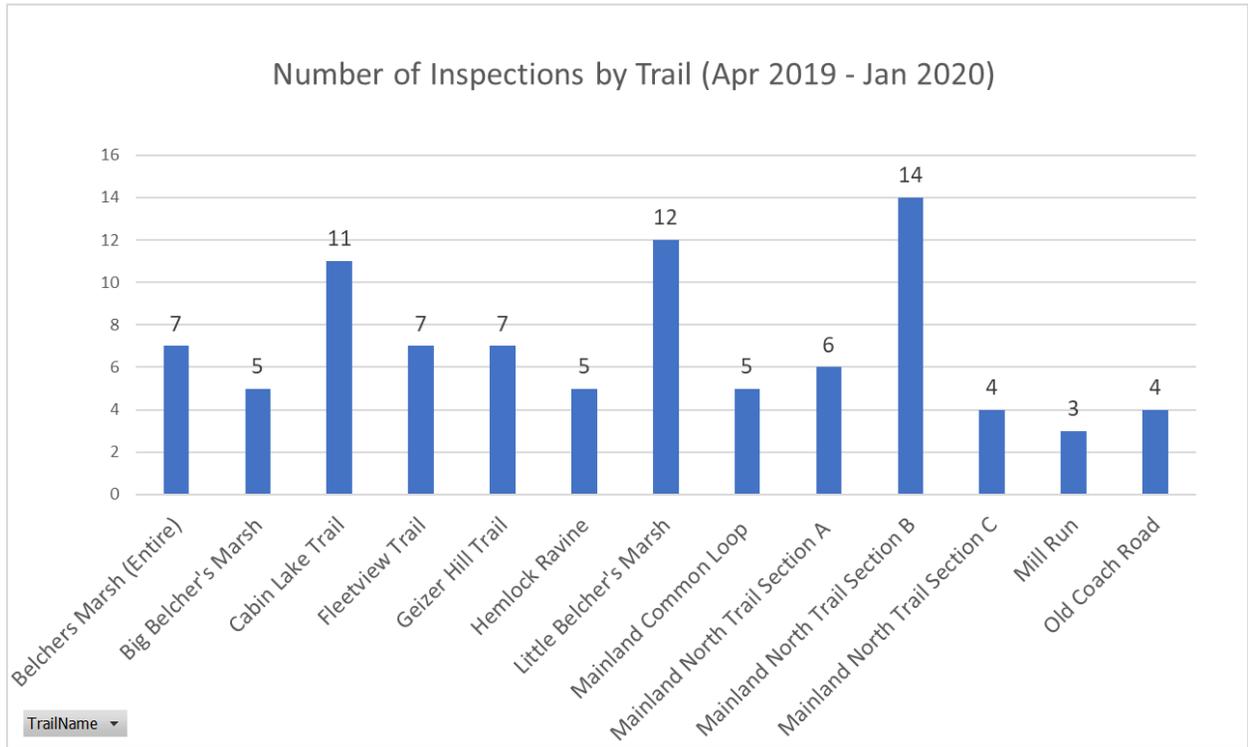
Concluding Comments: Dave Murphy expressed thanks to Jessica for HNWTA's partnership in funding for the park benches and picnic table near Kearney Run.

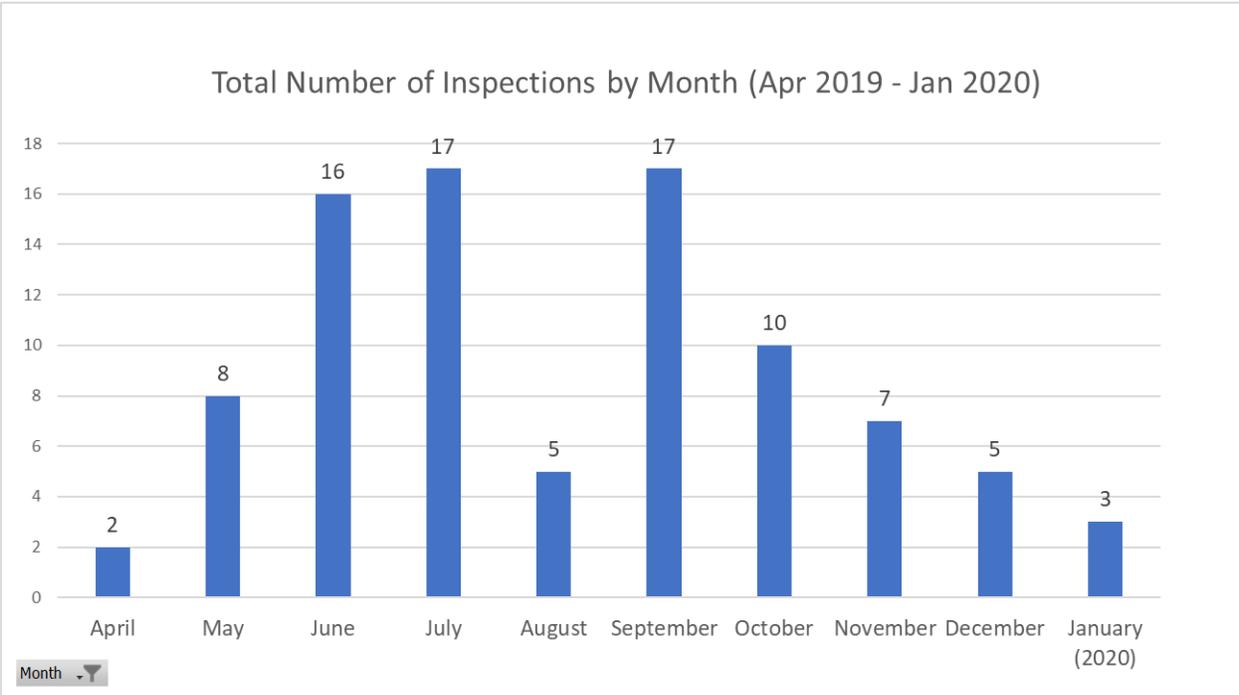
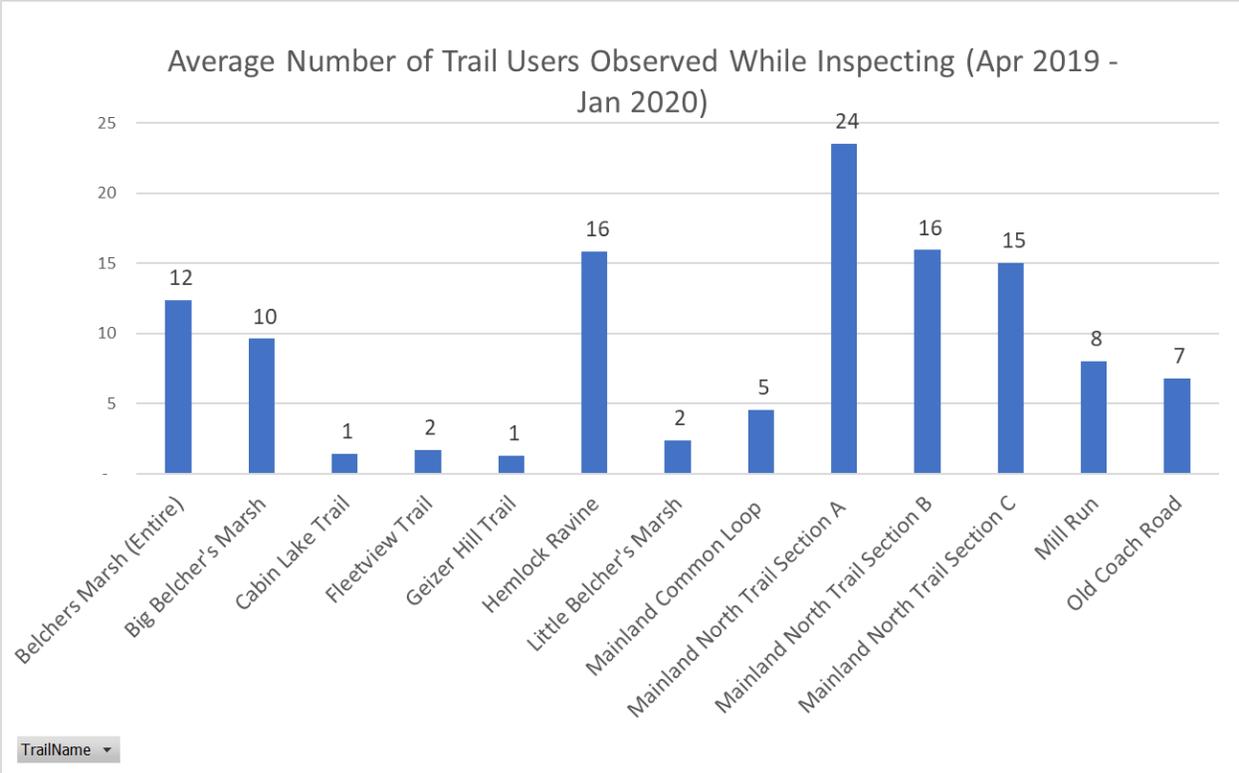
Sharon Gibson expressed thanks on behalf of all Board members to Jessica Boyd for her outstanding leadership of the Board in the past, and current, challenging years.

Meeting adjourned 8:45pm

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Leslie

Appendix 1





Summary of Reports to HRM 311 (Apr 2019 - Jan 2020)

