

**Halifax North West Trails Association  
Annual General Meeting  
6 May, 2019  
Networking and membership: 6:30-7:00  
Business meeting 7:00 – 7:30  
Keynote Address: 7:30 – 8:30**

**A G E N D A**

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1. Welcome, Call to Order, Announcements
2. Additions to and approval of agenda
3. Minutes of previous AGM June 27, 2018 (attached)
  - a. Changes and approval
  - b. Business arising from minutes
4. Committee Reports for 2018-2019 (see attached)
  - a. Chair's Report Jessica Boyd
  - b. Treasurer's Report Frank Gibson
  - c. Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA) Report Mike Basford
  - d. Maintenance Committee Report Frank Gibson
  - e. Events Committee Report Sharon Gibson
  - f. Communications Committee Report Alyssa Doué
  - g. Friends of BMBCL Report James Boyer
  - h. Trail Stewardship Program Report Spencer Doué
  - i. Advocacy and Policy Committee Report Bob McDonald / Wendy McDonald
5. Board members for 2019-2020
6. New Business
7. Adjournment

**Keynote Address: Trails to Nature - Improving Your Health**

**Karen McKendry, Wilderness Outreach Coordinator at the EAC**

Karen spent her childhood exploring the woods and waters of Ontario and Quebec, clearly the "nature nut" of her family. Her passion for the environment, paired with a lot of hard work, has earned her a BSc. in Ecology, and Master's of Environmental Studies. Since moving to Nova Scotia in 2005, Karen has worked as a conservation planner and biologist, and volunteered with the Young Naturalists Club, a nature club for kids. Karen has training in Wilderness and Remote First Aid, OCC Field Leader (Hiking, and Winter), and Reconnecting with Nature workshop facilitation, and puts this training and her skills to use when she leads public hikes. When not devoting herself to the Ecology Action Centre's good work, she can be found rooting around in her garden, paddling on the Northwest Arm, cooking up a storm, or laughing with her two wild little boys.

**HALIFAX NORTH WEST TRAILS ASSOCIATION  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
JUNE 27, 2018  
7:00 P.M.  
KESHEN GOODMAN LIBRARY, HALIFAX**

DRAFT MINUTES

Attendance: There were 45 people in attendance including 6 Board members and HRM AT Staff member, Emma Martin.

Board members: Bob McDonald, Wendy McDonald, Sharon Gibson, Frank Gibson, Jessica Boyd, Mike Basford, Heather Leslie, Alyssa Doué, Spencer Doué

**1. Welcome, call to order, announcements**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chair Jessica Boyd

Announcements: There were no announcements

**2. Approval of the agenda/additional items (attached)**

There were no additional items.

MOTION: To approve the agenda as circulated.

MOVED: Jessica Boyd

SECONDED: Mike Basford

MOTION CARRIED.

**3a. Minutes of the last AGM – June 27, 2018**

The minutes were reviewed by Jessica Boyd

MOTION: To approve the minutes as circulated.

MOVED: Jessica Boyd

SECONDED: Chuck Lienux

MOTION CARRIED.

The minutes will be available on the website.

**3b. Business arising from the minutes**

Any business arising will be covered in the following agenda items.

**4. Reports were presented as circulated**

a. **Chairs' Report (attached)**                      **Jessica Boyd**

b. **Treasurers Report (attached)**              **Frank Gibson**

The financial report was presented by Frank.

MOTION: To approve the financial report as presented.

MOVED: Frank Gibson

SECONDED: Chuck Lienux

MOTION CARRIED.

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|----|--|--------------------------------------|
| c. | <b>Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA) (attached)</b> | <b>Mike Basford</b>                  |
| d. | <b>Maintenance Committee (attached)</b>                      | <b>Frank Gibson</b>                  |
| e. | <b>Events Committee (attached)</b>                           | <b>Sharon Gibson</b>                 |
| f. | <b>Communications Committee (attached)</b>                   | <b>Alyssa Doué</b>                   |
| g. | <b>Friends of BMBCL Society (attached)</b>                   | <b>James Boyer</b>                   |
| h. | <b>Trail Stewardship Program (attached)</b>                  | <b>Spencer Doué</b>                  |
| i. | <b>Advocacy and Outreach (attached)</b>                      | <b>Bob McDonald / Wendy McDonald</b> |

Members and supporters present acknowledged the efforts of the volunteers as described by all the committee work.

**5. Nomination Report:**

The following slate was presented for the Board for 2019-20

- Mike Basford
- Jessica Boyd
- Alyssa Doué
- Spencer Doué
- Frank Gibson
- Sharon Gibson
- Heather Leslie
- Bob McDonald
- Wendy McDonald

There was a call for further nominations from the floor, there was one: Pete Roberts

Put forward as officers for the upcoming year:

- Jessica Boyd - Chair
- Bob McDonald – Past Chair
- Frank Gibson – Treasurer
- Heather Leslie – Corporate Secretary

MOTION: To approve the slate of Board Members

MOVED: Jessica Boyd

SECONDED: Chuck Lienux

MOTION CARRIED.

**6. New Business**

none

**7. Adjournment**

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Bob McDonald

TIME: 7:45pm

#### **4. Committee Reports for 2018-2019**

##### **4a. Chair's Report**

It has been my pleasure to serve as Chair of the HNWTA for my second year. I am beginning to learn the ropes with ample assistance from my team of dedicated volunteers on the board, on construction crews, our new trail monitors, on social media and in so many other ways.

I will let the leaders of these various committees describe their activities themselves, but I would like to personally thank Diane Arsenault for running our Facebook page and keeping our neighbours informed about all we do.

This year we have many important projects starting up; I will start with a new name for the long trail that runs under the powerline. This trail is known by many names, but will now be simply the Mainland North Trail or MNT for short. The major push for the name change is a pilot project headed by HRM and Nova Scotia to create a province wide bicycle route, the Blue Route. New signage for the Blue Route will be installed on the MNT this summer for a trial period of 5 years.

We are very excited to announce that a major extension of the MNT has been approved. This year engineering and route planning will begin to extend the MNT northwards from Parkland Drive 2 km to Larry Uteck Blvd. This phase of the project requires community involvement to plan the route. This \$100,000 project is funded and led by the HRM Active Transportation group, and we thank them very much. Construction will likely start in 2021 or 2022. When completed, this project will connect the growing area of Bedford West with an Active Transportation trail all the way to Fairview.

Over the spring and summer of 2018 construction was completed on four short neighbourhood connections to the Mainland North Trail. These projects now allow wheeled access to the MNT from both Turnmill Park and Mary Clayton Memorial Park. One of the existing connections to the MNT from the Canada Games Centre has been paved, allowing snow clearing and improved winter access. The final connection improves the MNT access at the top of Westridge Dr., creating a safer trail-roadway intersection, wheel chair parking spots and an accessible path to the upper parking lot and Dog Park. Most of this construction was funded by the HRM Active Transportation group, but we used funds from past Councillor Reg Rankin to purchase and install three benches. We have some funds remaining from his generous gift, so please let us know where you would like other trail amenities to be installed.

We continue to look after the chip-covered trail in what is known as the Mainland Commons Passive area or Park. This small remaining area of woodland and bog is a lovely place to walk at any time of year. However, it will undergo increased pressure in the next few years as the Mainland Commons Development begins with hundreds of new residents moving to the adjoining area. We feel the best way to protect the area from the increased population is to keep foot traffic to a few well-placed trails. Therefore we have been raising funds to improve some existing informal paths in the area. We estimate we will need about \$60,000. Unfortunately HRM was not able to fund these recreational trails in the 2019-2020 budget year, but we are moving ahead to find other sources of funding to accomplish this goal, and plan to continue to ask HRM for funding in future years. We are also working closely with the developer, W. M. Fares, to incorporate some of their lands into the Mainland Commons Park.

Financially this year we are well supported by a HALIFAX / HRTA Active Transportation Maintenance Agreement (\$3,000), a Recapitalization grant (\$1,500) and a Capital projects grant (\$100,000). We also have a NS Community Culture and Heritage Trail Maintenance Grant (\$1,000), a TD Bank Canada Parks People grant (\$2,000), and a Chebucto West Community Health Board grant (\$2,000).

Respectfully submitted;  
Jessica Boyd, Chair HNWTA

#### 4b. Treasurer's Report

<b>BANK BALANCE APRIL 1, 2018</b>	\$ 18,409.73	
<b>INCOME:</b>		
Trail Metre Sales		
Membership	\$ 185.00	
Donations		
Maintenance - HRM	\$ 5,187.50	
Maintenance - Province	\$ 1,000.00	
HRTA Meeting		
Friends of BMBCL Society	\$ 256.12	
Nordic Poles Project		
Other Income	\$ 1,095.06	
Current Liabilities	\$ 1,185.38	
<b>TOTAL INCOME:</b>	\$ 8,909.06	
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>		HST
Insurances:	\$ 698.46	
Office	\$ 155.89	\$ 21.64
Website	\$ 287.50	\$ 37.50
Membership (NSTF, RJSC	\$ 286.15	\$ 30.00
Maintenance Tools/supplies	\$ 585.04	\$ 71.82
Maintenance Materials	\$ 622.77	\$ 64.09
Meetings/travel/tolls/workshops/events	\$ 758.33	\$ 7.17
Printing	\$ 1,420.53	\$ 28.99
Benches (Reg Rankin)	\$ 3,036.00	\$ 396.00
Friends BMBCL	\$ 256.12	
HRTA Meeting	\$ 299.00	\$ 39.00
Nordic Pole Project	\$ 24.12	
Signage	\$ 1,200.00	
Miscellaneous	\$ 717.24	\$ 25.63
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	\$ 10,347.15	
<b>BANK BALANCE MARCH 31, 2019</b>	\$ 16,971.64	
TOTAL HST		\$ 721.84
HST TO SEPT. 30 2018		\$ 118.08
HST OCT.1 FF 2018		\$ 603.76

Respectfully submitted;  
Frank Gibson, Treasurer

#### **4c. Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA) Report**

HRTA is a volunteer association made up of individual trail groups around HRM. There are now 24 groups including HNWTA.

HRTA's purposes:

- Voice to Halifax (HRM) and others including senior levels of government – advocate and facilitate both “up” to government and “down” to trail groups and users.
- Support for Trail Development – technical and non-technical
- Access to funding – Recommendations as to allocation on proposed projects
- Forum for information Exchange and Discussion
- Mentorship

HNWTA has a representative (and alternate) on the HRTA board. We also have actively participated in its subcommittees, notably Bob McDonald's and Wendy McDonald's efforts. Currently Jessica Boyd is on the Maintenance Funding committee

The main contact in HRM is the Active Transportation (AT) group within the Transportation and Public Works department. HRM's Maintenance funding is sourced from Parks & Recreation department.

For the past three years groups have been able to apply for capital (construction or major repair) funding only for AT trails, such as Mainland North Trail, but not so-called recreation or loop trails such as the Mainland Common Loop or the Old Coach Road Trail. HRTA is attempting to persuade HRM to address this gap.

#### **4d. Maintenance Committee Report**

Our association promotes the use and maintenance of several trails in the Mainland North area of HRM.

We repaired the surface of the Old Coach Road Trail and the Mainland Common Loop. We participated in the maintenance of the Belcher's Marsh Trail, and the Geizer's Hill trail. We had three benches placed on the Mainland North Trail.

We have a core group of approximately 15 volunteers and two or three other groups who help us out from time to time. A new group of 20 trained volunteer stewards keep an eye on all of the trails

We refill six doggie bag dispensers at various trail locations.

We had repairs made to our kiosk, and one partially dislodged sign.

We continue to pursue improving a rough trail that provides access to the Common Loop and beyond.

Respectfully submitted;

Frank Gibson, Chair, Maintenance committee with Bob McDonald and Julian Gonzalez

#### **4e. Events Committee Report**

This was a great year for Halifax North West Trails events. We offered wilderness hikes, interpretative walks, repaired trails, cleaned up trails, led walks in the community and led Nordic pole walks. We partnered with a number of different organizations, the Keshen Goodman library, Friends of Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes, Nova Scotia Association of Geocachers, Hike Nova Scotia and others to carry out and host many of these events. Hundreds of people participated in the many events we offered.

We attended trail patrol training, hike leadership training and offered our own trail stewardship training. We applied for two grants and received funding to help us host more events and get community input for a new trail.

A new activity for us this year was our Winter Tree for the Birds. Forty people came out on December 16th to make simple bird feeders and hang them along the Mainland Common Loop Trail. We also had a record number of people sign up for a snowshoe hike.

This year we were sponsored by a local business, Foot Solutions. Together we are planning a large community event for June 9th, called Community Foot Prints. We are bringing together like-minded organizations to promote

enjoyment of nature on our trails. Look for information on our website.

Our membership base is expanding and we are hopeful to draw more people to our group. We are very interested in hearing your ideas for us, and to hear of events you would like to see in the community.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Gibson  
Chair, Events Committee

#### **4f. Communications Committee Report**

This year has been busy for communications! My goal has been to streamline information given to members and make communication easier for all. I've also been focusing on creating continuity for our board members and researching the best methods of communication and file sharing.

Our official email address is [hnwta.communications@gmail.com](mailto:hnwta.communications@gmail.com). This address is monitored daily during week days as it is found on our internet sites for contact, our business cards, brochures, and membership applications.

Our website is continuing to be updated, and just recently we have moved over to a new system that will make our website cleaner, easier to navigate, and easier for us to maintain. We are also looking into added functionality such as the ability to sign up and pay for membership online. I'd like to thank our website company immediaC for their help with the website, for working on the design to change it over to a new system, and especially for their generous donation of the SSL licence for our site. Please visit [www.halifaxnorthwesttrails.ca](http://www.halifaxnorthwesttrails.ca) and send your comments and suggestions to our email address (or use the "contact us" option of the site). I'd love to hear your thoughts as members!

A large project that was completed this year was a redesign and reprinting of our trails brochure. We changed some of the trails included on the brochure and updated all of the trail data. It is our plan to keep this brochure updated every 2-3 years so that correct information is being shared to our members and the community as a whole. I would like to thank KKP printing for offering us a not-for-profit discount rate, and a special thank you to Will Flanagan, cartographer at Saint Mary's University for creating the trail map from our trail data.

To create transparency to our members, we have posted and defined the roles of our different volunteer committees. These are posted on our website so that members can learn about our different committees if they are interested in joining any. To continue this project, we have started to write Operations Details for Committee Chairs and Executive Members of the board. These documents are designed to detail the specific tasks that each committee chair and executive member perform weekly, monthly, yearly, and continuously. By documenting this, it ensures our organization will have continuity throughout the years, and new members will have instructions as to how to perform their role.

Further to the goal of board continuity, we have also decided to use Google Docs to store our important board documents and photos so that they are easily shared with all board members. This enables the documents to be accessible to all, and not just stored on one computer or account. This also provides a better way to store our membership list and track volunteer hours, so accuracy and diligence are increasing in these aspects.

Lastly, Spencer and I received Field Leader training (through the Outdoor Council of Canada) to ensure safe and successful hiking events for our trail group. I have since created a Hike Leader Package using information from this course to help any HNWTA volunteers who are interested in leading hikes feel confident in planning and carrying out a successful event. By creating this document, we are ensuring that Hike Leaders know the general rules and safety considerations when planning an event with HNWTA.

Thank you for a great year everyone!

Alyssa Doué, Communications Chairperson

#### **4 g. Friends of Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes Society**

By way of background, The Friends of Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes Society was formed in May, 2018 to expedite the process of the formation of one of Canada's largest, urban wilderness parks -a work-in-progress for more than 30 years. In fact, BMBCL has been recognized by the City of Halifax as an important natural area, rich in

ecological features worth protecting, for nearly 50 years. The Metropolitan Area Planning Committee (MAPC) study of 1971 identifies the area as a high priority for conservation. The MAPC study also recommended a fledgling greenbelt for the city with a network of interconnected natural areas. Unfortunately, over the years little was done to actually implement that vision until very recently.

Initially, we have the Hobson Lake block, purchased by Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) in January, 2018. And as you are probably aware of by now, the Federal government announced \$860,000 in funding for Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Park, to be used to buy roughly 135 hectares of land in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

We were very pleased to have the public event announcement of this purchase being held at Maskwa and attended by three levels of government officials including Mayor Savage and Geoff Regan. It is truly exciting to see the federal government and municipality partner up for a great cause.

On the plus side, we have our web site [www.bluemountainfriends.ca](http://www.bluemountainfriends.ca) set up and a newsletter going out to our membership. We now have 'event' insurance and will begin to lead hikes into the area.

We are working on a brochure and are considering setting up a Fund Raising Committee as we continue to offer a free membership.

Our Advocacy/planning committee has been extremely busy with work on a EDM report, and letters and meetings with HRM officials. We have had ongoing talks with Mayor Savage and CAO Jacques Dube. Recently we wrote a letter to three levels of government inquiring about the Sussex land swap. This involves another example of 'death by a thousand cuts' scenario that we have seen happen to the outer boundaries of the proposed park. In this case, Sussex Drive would be extended by HRM back into the wilderness area to connect with the mysterious, and concerning highway 113.

We had a very successful canoe trip with the Mayor and plan of more trips in the future. It is certainly a wonderful way of seeing the promise first hand that this area holds. We plan on continuing our art event and have booked the Keshen Goodman library for this coming November.

Outstanding issues that we are working on are: whether or not we should be involved in stewardship -which is a surprisingly complex and controversial issue. Do we concentrate on advocacy, or stewardship, or both? Certainly, Dusan Sudak's recent clean up event and the public support it garnered speaks volumes for the importance of stewardship.

In other announcements the BMBCL Society AGM is going to be June 12.

Perhaps, we might lose sight of the potential of this wonderful legacy project for future citizens of HRM, but having spent some time canoeing through the backcountry I can promise you that it really is a Kedji-like experience. And yes, it is the last remaining wilderness corridor for the endangered, mainland moose. We must continue to sacrifice our time, and make continued commitment to the success of the proposed regional park. I have discovered that it will demand a great deal of patience and attention to detail.

It has been exciting to be involved with the Friends of Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Society. Although it has been difficult in keeping the aspirations we had initially started out with. Ideas change over time and are swayed or changed by outside influences. We have discovered it takes patience, commitment and very careful attention to detail to bring long term goals to a successful conclusion. It also is important to encourage community partnerships along the way.

The Events Committee has received great support from HNWTA. Wendy McDonald and Heather Leslie have been outstanding in their assistance and advice. We would also like to approach Spencer and Alyssa (as they are extremely knowledgeable) and ask them to help in leading hikes for Friends of BMBCLS.

Currently we look forward to being involved in the community event sponsored by Foot Solutions. We are very thankful for any inclusion or partnership HNWTA has to offer.

Thank you to HNWTA and we look forward to a long continued partnership on future activities and events.

Respectfully submitted,

James Boyer

BMBCLS Events Chair and HNWTA representative to BMBCL



#### **4 h. Trail Stewardship Program Report**

Since identifying the need for a Trail Stewardship Program, we have been busy this past year finalizing its design and working to implement it for the 2019 summer season. In many regards, the program has been very successful to date:

- From our initial call for volunteers (through both our email distribution list and in the Parkland newsletter) we have had 20 people sign up to act as trail monitors
- This has led to six of our eight trails having more than one monitor and we are working on getting additional volunteers for the remaining two trails (this will reduce inspection workload for individual volunteers)
- We have developed an electronic trail inspection checklist that can either be filled out on the computer or printed and scanned/emailed, and have also developed a checklist on our website – these provide multiple ways for trail monitors to submit their completed inspections
- We hosted four different information sessions in April and have met up with 13 of 20 monitors thus far to explain the program and answer questions
- We provided lanyards and hats to these monitors to wear while performing inspections; business cards were also provided to hand out to trail users interested in learning more about HNWTA
- We will work to meet with the remaining trail monitors to provide them with lanyards and hats and answer any questions in person
- We officially started inspections this month (May) and will continue until winter conditions make it hazardous to do so (end date of season is at monitor discretion)

We were very pleasantly surprised by the number of people who volunteered to act as a trail monitor and our support and development of both them and the program is ongoing. Over time we hope this will allow us to be proactive in identifying issues on the trails which can then be reported to HRM 311. We also hope this will help increase visibility of HNWTA to the public and provide a means for trail users to interact with our organization while providing volunteers with a sense of duty and contribution to their community. Finally, we also hope to use this program to detect things like recurring maintenance needs and the volume of trail users so that this data can be sent to HRM.

We will continue to maintain this program and are excited by the possibilities it holds since it is a new endeavor for HNWTA!

Respectfully submitted,  
Spencer Doue

#### **4i. Advocacy and Outreach Committee Report**

Networking and attending meetings hosted by other organizations has allowed us to learn more about funding and grants, making a difference in our community by connecting trails to nature and other opportunities to reach out to new and different trail users. This is a multicultural community with lots of seniors enjoying retirement. Our programs have helped reach out to some of these individuals. Regular attendance at Engage Mainland North Roundtable Meetings, articles and notices in the Parkview News along with newsletters to our members and contacts help to keep the public informed. Word of mouth is key so we hope participants will bring friends or family on a hike or to an event.

An application to HRM for Recreation Trail extension in the passive area of the Mainland Common was 1 of 5 denied, however alternate funds will be sought to continue planning for these new trails. Stay tuned for a community engagement event to review plans for the trail footprints and potential wayfinding and signage. A small grant from the Chebucto West Community Health Board has kick-started the required funding. We understand HRM may fund some Recreation Trails next year. Meetings with elected officials and staff at all levels of government continue in order to keep lines of communication open. Our new stewardship programme for each of the named trails in our region will help us all. It is our responsibility as users to alert the municipality of issues related to safety, vandalism or matters requiring their attention. Sometimes it takes a while but calling 311 or emailing [contactHRM@halifax.ca](mailto:contactHRM@halifax.ca)

should be the first point of contact.

Partnerships have allowed the trails group to reach out. Ducks Unlimited are now in Halifax and are using Belchers Marsh as a Wetland of Excellence for school programmes with Park West School and eventually Halifax West. Class trips are being scheduled. This, in part, is encouraging us to re-initiate the water quality monitoring of this popular area along with help from SMU, Atlantic Water Network and an NSCC Environmental Technology student who will be completing her practicum with us during the summer. You may meet her at an upcoming event or two.

As members of NS Trails, Hike NS and NS Environmental Network, we benefit from their outreach and communications. Additional opportunities arise including training and the annual hike summit. Our local Library has been a constant and houses the collection of Nordic Poles we donated, to be borrowed like a book. If there is interest, we can cohost another training session for new users.

Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area and the proposed Regional Park have been an agenda item since 2006 taking priority at times with letter writing, hikes and trail planning over the years. With the formation of the new Friends group and their focus on the Regional Park, we have stepped back but still enjoy promoting and leading walks in to the area. Research and community engagement will help guide next steps. The Plein Air event last summer at Hobsons Lake and follow-up Art Display was supported by our members. We have also stepped forward to support the Sandy Lake Regional Park coalition to remind HRM that this area (near Bedford) was also proposed in the 2006 Regional Plan; stay tuned for progress there.

An exciting addition to our activities has been encouraging the use of iNaturalist.ca to create more awareness and education regarding our local natural assets. Several of the local trails had visits from observers, local citizen scientists, in the worldwide City Nature Challenge.

Wendy & Bob McDonald

**5. Board members for 2019-2020**

**Nomination Report:**

The following slate is presented for the Board for 2019-20

Mike Basford

Jessica Boyd

Alyssa Doué

Spencer Doué

Frank Gibson

Sharon Gibson

Heather Leslie

Bob McDonald

Wendy McDonald

Put forward as officers for the upcoming year:

Jessica Boyd -Chair

Bob McDonald – Past Chair

Frank Gibson – Treasurer

Heather Leslie – Corporate Secretary