



Halifax North West Trails Association

Chair's Report – Annual General Meeting, Sunday, 3 April 2011

This is my first annual report as HNWTA Chair. To begin, a few words of introduction to the Trails Group might be in order. HNWTA was founded in 2003 as a community-based, volunteer group whose mandate is the building, maintenance and stewardship of trails in our area. This area stretches from Hammonds Plains Rd in the north to St Margaret's Bay Rd in the south, and from the Bedford Basin in the east to Kingswood and the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area to the west. It's very large area! We continue to provide stewardship for all of our area trails.

We have accomplished a lot in our nearly 8 years of existence but I will only summarize some of our activities during the past year.

Although our membership is fairly small, we do have an extensive contact list and have regular walks and hikes during the warmer months. For example, last year, we organized hikes along the Old Coach Road (with Pat Leader), Belchers Marsh (with Jamie Boyer) and three into the BMBCL WA – to Charlies Lake (with Bob), to Susies Lake (with Nancy) and to Blue Mountain (with Bob). The Charlies Lake hike was listed in the DNR Events Guide.

I should also indicate at this point the current membership of the HNWTA Board. I serve as Chair, Scot Jennings is Vice-chair, Davena Davis is Secretary, Wendy is Past Chair and I also serve as Treasurer. Directors include Shirley McIntyre, our membership secretary who also communicates with our members and contacts, Pat Leader, Nancy Jennings, Lea Anne McLeod, Jamie Boyer and MaryAnn McGrath. Our son Chris is our web site manager.

We continue to urge HRM Regional Council and Staff to assemble the land required for the BMBCL Regional Park, especially the land around the Birch Cove Lakes, and, to that end, a letter was sent to the Mayor and all Councillors urging the initiation of land

acquisition as promised in the Regional Plan. A presentation was made at the February Chebucto Community Council meeting to describe our group's activities and to urge Councillors to support Regional Trails during the upcoming budget deliberations for 2011-2012.

HNWTA is a member of Nova Scotia Trails Federation, Hike Nova Scotia, the NS Environmental Network and we are registered in good standing with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies. We are also a member of Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA) and attend their monthly meetings. We hosted one HRTA meeting during the year. Membership in NS Trails allows us to purchase several types of insurance for officers and directors, members and third parties. It also provides us with preferred rates for registration at their annual conference and we were able to send 4 delegates to their October Conference in Cornwallis. Apart from HRTA meetings and our own, we also attended meetings on the Western Common, the Bedford Waterfront, Chain of Lakes Trail and the Five Bridges Candidate Wilderness Area.

Now a few words about some of our trails:

- **Belchers Marsh** – The annual clean-up was held on the second Sunday in May. Jim Ross, a teacher in the Aquatic Resources Program at NSCC, has carried out the water quality monitoring over the past year.
- **Mainland Common Loop** – We worked with a group of enthusiastic young volunteers from PricewaterhouseCoopers for their “Green Day”, during which they planted trees and shrubs and did some trailbed remediation work. We were aided considerably during this effort by HRM Parks staff who provided wheelbarrows, rakes, shovels and a large load of wood chips. In addition, HRM Parks has also addressed the continuing problems we've had with water on the trail bed by doing some infilling with gravel. We are going to host the PwC group again this year in an attempt to complete remediation work on the trail.
- **Old Coach Road** – Pat Leader organizes regular trail clean-ups. Pat has also researched, designed and produced an excellent guide for the trail that can be picked up at the trailhead and dropped off at either end of the trail. Pat has discovered that this trail is being extended and has followed it through to Larry Uteck Drive!

No new Capital funding was available for HRTA trail groups in 2010-2011. However, HNWTA was able to retain our unused capital funds from previous years; we were advised that these funds needed to be committed by 31 March 2011. The Board decided to use these funds for our signage project, which included the building and installation of a kiosk in some central location. To this end, Board members carried out an inventory of signage requirements for each of the trails in our area, except those in Hemlock Ravine Park. We looked for locations for way finding, directional, trailhead and interpretive signage. Lea Anne collected the data in a spreadsheet. Street sign names have been erected at major intersections along the Linear Trail (this was one of the recommendations put forward by Scot and Nancy Jennings who surveyed the trail for signage requirements).

In parallel, we began the search for a suitable location for the kiosk, and after several meetings and many phone calls and emails, we found the ideal location at the new Canada Games Centre. We have been working with HRM landscape architect Nicole May and have an acceptable design and location. On March 31 we made a firm commitment to New Century Signs for the construction and installation of the kiosk. This came about as a result of some back-and-forth discussions with New Century and some additional funding from one of our local Councillors, Debbie Hum. Many thanks, Debbie!! The work should be complete by June. As well, we are preparing display materials for the kiosk. We have been working on a large "Green Map" showing our trail resources with Will Flanagan, the cartographer in Dr. Cathy Conrad's group in the Geography Department at St Mary's University. The map is nearly done. Trail write-ups are also being prepared. It will be great to see the end of this project! Worth noting is the fact that this Green Map and the trail descriptions will also be used in the trails brochure also currently in preparation.

Many of the HNWTA Board meetings during 2009 related to the formulation of a Strategic Plan for the group. Scot has worked on it and consulted with HRM Community Development liaison Miro Rak, and we now have a planning document to guide our future activities. Thanks, Scot!

Applications have been submitted for HRM Capital and Maintenance Funding for 2011-2012. The Capital Funding request (\$50,000 in year 1) is for building an extension to the Linear Trail south to connect (in year 4) with the new Chain of Lakes Trail. The Maintenance Funding request is to provide remediation to two of our trails, namely the Mainland Common Loop and Old Coach Road. In addition, Maintenance Funds were requested to cover group insurance, some office supplies and other sundry items. We await Regional Council's final budget approvals.

Perhaps our most successful venture during the past year was the funding of our application to the NS Department of Seniors, Positive Aging Fund. We were awarded \$6,218 in June 2010 to encourage seniors to adopt a more active lifestyle through walking activities. This was a joint project with the NS chapter of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP NS). 25 Copies of Hiking Trails of HRM, 2nd edition, by M. Haynes were purchased and donated to the Halifax library system. A series of 12 guided hikes were organized to take place during September/October of 2010. Some 150 walkers, including many seniors, enjoyed these hikes that took place across HRM. Each volunteer hike leader was given a copy of the Haynes book. Still to be completed from these project funds is the preparation of a trails brochure, describing HNWTA and the trail assets of our area. Finally, project funds will be used to purchase 3 benches to be situated at strategic locations along the trails, possibly including near the new kiosk at the CGC.

A further search for funding is on-going as applications to HRM (Community Grants Program) and TD Friends of the Environment have been submitted. Two other potential sources, Mountain Equipment Coop and the Evergreen Foundation are on our radar.

So, we look forward to an exciting and productive year ahead.

Finally, I would like to thank all Board members who were most supportive and active during the past year. Unfortunately, MaryAnn, Jamie and Shirley are stepping down from the Board and I thank them for their work. I am especially grateful to Shirley who has worked with the Group since our inception in 2003! Many thanks, Shirley!! I am very pleased to welcome Bruce Smith, a local resident and keen hiker, who has agreed to offer his services and expertise to the Board.

Thank you all for coming.

Bob McDonald, Chair
Halifax North West Trails Assoc

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