

Conservation Communique #2 March, 2016 Hallowell Conservation Commission to Hallowell City Council

The Hallowell Conservation Commission (HCC) was created by the City “for the protection, development, or use of the natural resources located within the City.” Our ongoing work and priorities are based on public input (including the Comprehensive Plan and Open Space planning processes, cross-membership on the Recreation Commission and Stevens School Advisory Committee, collaboration with the Tree Board, and via other public meetings), and HCC members’ skills and expertise. We also respond to new issues as they arise before the City Council, Planning Board and other public bodies.

Ongoing work

Over the last two years the HCC has maintained focus on retaining the North Field and pond of the Stevens School property as open space; continued work on control of, and education about, invasive plant species; and continued care of trails and natural resources at the City Forest and Recreation Area (“the Res”) and Jamie's Pond Wildlife Management Area. We also have sponsored and participated in local Earth Day activities.

Stevens School Open Space: Public support for retaining the open space in the northwest corner of the Stevens School property came to the fore in both the Open Space Plan and Comprehensive Plan processes. The HCC has held walks in the North Field for the City Council and members of the public; invited the Kennebec Land Trust to address the Council on the Howard Hill project and its significance to Hallowell; and served on the Stevens School Advisory Committee.

Invasives: In our efforts to control invasive plants we work with Hall-Dale High School’s Day of Caring volunteers in coordination with the Tree Board and the Public Works Department. We are also part of a national invasive species mapping project in coordination with Maine’s Invasive Plant Biologist within the State of Maine’s Natural Areas Program. Our public education efforts include a recently installed informational sign adjacent to the Rail Trail near the Granite Crane installation.

The Res: The HCC contributes to sustainable development and use of the Res by participating on the Recreation Commission, with current priorities supporting a boundary survey and eventual initiation of a comprehensive management plan. We cooperated with the Tree Board on the Forest Management Plan. Public inputs on trail names are underway. We are planning a series of public walks at the Res (birding, wildflowers, etc.) in 2016. We also submitted grant applications with the Manchester Conservation Commission to explore connecting the two communities with trails.

Goals for 2016

- Continue to support all branches of City government in matters regarding natural resources
- Participate through the Recreation Commission in planning for a survey of the Res
- Continue efforts supporting open space on the Stevens School property
- Update Hallowell’s index of publicly and privately owned open spaces (required by MRSA Section 3261)
- Increase public enjoyment of, care for and engagement with Hallowell’s open space and natural resources by scheduling public activities, using social media, and other means
- Continue invasive species mapping and control
- Continue working with adjoining Conservation Commissions for trail funding and other co-benefits
- Increase public participation in HCC matters and activities

We invite the City Council to:

- Like HCC's Facebook Page at Hallowell Conservation Commission
- Follow us on Twitter @GreenHallowell and Instagram at GreenHallowell
 - Volunteer for trail days!
- Call on the HCC with your interests, questions, concerns about any matters impacting Hallowell's natural resources



HCC's new educational kiosk by the Rail Trail



HCC members and Hall-Dale High School students prepare to remove invasive species at the Res on the 2015 Day of Caring

Current members of the Hallowell Conservation Commission (2016):
Rosemary Presnar, Chair; Deb Sewall, Secretary
Jon Lund, Cathie Murray, Peter Spiegel, Sarah Shed, Karen Simpson