Hooksett Riverwalk Trail

The Conservation Commission was excited to announce the opening of the first half of the Brick Kiln Historic Trail Loop in early November. The trail loop includes two 8-foot wide boardwalks over wetlands of 225- and 234-feet—about the length of 1-1/2 football fields. The construction project was completed with design and oversight by Stantec.

The loop was named to mark the historical significance of the Head and Son Brick Yard that operated in this area from 1850 to 1930 and is depicted on the Hooksett Town Seal. The grand opening had to be postponed due to COVID.

For funding to complete the next phase of the loop, the HCC applied for an $80,000 grant by NH State Parks Recreational Trails Program (RTP). The final application was 91 pages and included letters of support from the Hooksett Town Council, Southern NH Planning Commission, Society for Protection of NH Forests, Hooksett Planning Board, and Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. The results will not be announced until the fall of 2020. (Fingers crossed!)
Hooksett RiverwalkTrail continued

Thanks to Bennett Nelson and Boy Scout Troop 292, a trail bridge was completed and installed over wetlands for Bennet’s Eagle Scout project. Although the project was delayed due to COVID, our guys managed to pull it together and completed the bridge in July.

Conservation Chair Cindy Robertson and Bennett pose for a picture at the completed bridge.

The HCC partnered with the Southern NH Planning Commission in the placement of a pedestrian counter at the trailhead of the Hooksett Riverwalk Trail. Over a 2-week period in October, the report showed an average of 78 visitors per day.

HCC entered discussion with a local farmer about the possibility of resuming farming activities on the HRT. This discussion is on hold due to lack of access to the property for farming equipment.

The Hooksett Riverwalk Trail system design takes into consideration wildlife enhancement, protection of endangered species, scenic views of the river and unique property, and accessibility for all levels of hikers and visitors.
New Trail Kiosks and Signage

The HCC takes pride in our trail kiosks, maps, and signage. This year, we installed updates to the kiosk and map at the Hooksett Riverwalk Trail. The kiosk was constructed by Oliver Mack and Boy Scout Troop 292 in 2016 for Oliver’s Eagle Scout project.

A new kiosk was placed at the Clay Pond Headwaters Conservation Area. This kiosk was possible through an RTP grant received in partnership with Bear-Paw Regional Greenways. The kiosk provides property information and an up-to-date trail map!
New Trail Kiosks and Signage continued

The HCC redesigned and placed new signage and boundary markers at the Riverwalk Trail and the Head’s Pond Trail. The new signs are easy to read and carry a friendly tone to mark rules on property and fines for disobedience. It is hoped that new signs will reduce complaints regarding improper handling of dog waste and some visitors trespassing onto private properties abutting trails.
Clay Pond Headwaters Conservation Area

In August of 2019, the HCC contracted with the Student Conservation Commission and AmeriCorp for the construction of a new trail loop at Clay Pond. Using mostly hand tools, six team members spent two weeks blazing this trail and camping out at Bear Brook State Park. The new trail encompasses about 1/3-mile of loop and directs foot traffic away from ecologically sensitive areas on this property. The HCC plans to partner with this group again on future trail-building projects.

![Image of trail workers]

The HCC is discussing a plan with Boy Scout Troop 292 for adopting conservation land as an ongoing project. The Clay Pond Area would be a great fit for the boys for monitoring and clean-up of this vast conservation area in northeast Hooksett.

The HCC approved a request by the Merrimack Valley Trail Riders to use the Chester Turnpike as part of a charity trail-riding event in June to raise money for Cystic Fibrosis. The event was cancelled due to COVID.

Head’s Pond Conservation Area Stewardship Plan

The HCC commissioned a stewardship plan for town conservation properties (Carriage Manor, University Heights, Head’s Pond, and School District properties) collectively referred to as the Head’s Pond Conservation Area. The stewardship plan was admirably completed by Jeff Littleton of Moosewood Ecological and Swift Corwin of Calhoun and Corwin Forestry. The plan includes:

- Land assessment and recommendations
- Ecological and timber resources survey
- Updated maps

The HCC will use the plan to guide next steps in conservation efforts and trails for this area.
**Hooksett Old Home Day 2019**

The HCC staffed a booth for Old Home Day and spent the day informing residents of current activities and trails. We created a new t-shirt that promotes Hooksett’s trails. T-shirts were available for sale at our Old Home Day booth.

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**Hooksett Conservation Blog**

You can learn more about conservation activities in Hooksett on the HCC website and blog:

Conservation Commission website: [https://www.hooksett.org/conservation-commission](https://www.hooksett.org/conservation-commission)

HCC Blog: [https://hooksettconservationcommissionblog.wordpress.com/](https://hooksettconservationcommissionblog.wordpress.com/)

**Land acquisition and conservation projects**

With greater than 25-percent of town land conserved, the HCC is focusing on stewardship, trail enhancements, signage, and educational opportunities. Hooksett can be proud that it has achieved the “gold standard” in acquired and permanently conserved lands for the protection of wildlife, preservation of our natural resources, and enjoyment of future generations.

The Hooksett Conservation Commission meets **the second Monday of the month at 4:30 pm** in the Town Hall Chambers of the Municipal Building. All residents are encouraged to provide input on conservation related matters. Residents interested in becoming members or interested in participating in a specific project are urged to contact the Conservation Commission. All of us extend our deepest thank you to the community for your continued support and interest.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Robertson, Chair
David Ross, Vice Chair
Members: Phil Fitanides  Deb Miville  JoCarol Woodburn
Alternate Members: Robert Better, William Herlicka, and John Pieroni
Avery Comai, Town Council Representative
Leann Fuller, Staff Support

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Hooksett Conservation Commission