



THE MOUTH OF THE HAW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HAW RIVER TRAIL PARTNERSHIP

Winter 2013-14

www.thehaw.org

What is the Haw River Trail

Partnership?

In 2006, 10 governmental agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to work together for the development of the Haw River Trail and the conservation of its land and waters.

In this spirit, the cities of Burlington and Graham have partnered with Alamance County, to fund a full-time position to coordinate conservation and trail efforts on the Upper Haw River. This newsletter, and our website: www.thehaw.org, are an effort to inform the public about the ongoing work stemming from the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding.

NEW MULTI-USE TRAIL IN SAXAPAHAW EXTENDS HAW RIVER TRAIL SYSTEM

Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Saxapahaw Community, a new one mile loop is now open on the Saxapahaw River Trail section of the Haw River Trail. The multi-use trail is dubbed the “Scout Loop” due to its proximity to the Scout cabin adjacent to Saxapahaw Lake Paddle Access. The new trail hugs the river for a portion of the journey, but then heads upland offering dramatic views of the Haw and interesting elevation changes. The new addition brings the total amount of public trail in and around the Saxapahaw Community to 2.25 miles. Plans are underway for even more trail construction in the area. Congratulations to all the citizens in Saxapahaw who have worked to improve their community through these trails.



VIRGINIA MILL DAM REMOVED FROM HAW

The Haw is flowing freely through Swepsonville for the first time in 250 years after the remnants of the Virginia Mill Dam in Swepsonville were removed this Fall. The first dam in what is now Swepsonville was built by John Armstrong around 1760. In 1804, the site was purchased by North Carolina State Senator Archibald DeBow Murphey who rebuilt the gristmill and added a saw mill.



SWEPSONVILLE cont. on pg. 4

For questions, comments, or to remove your name from the mailing list, email info@thehaw.org or call 336/229-2229



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Quarterly Attendance at Haw River Trail Sites

September 1, 2012 through November 30, 2013

Altamahaw Paddle

Access:

4,739

Shallow Ford Natural Area:

4,509

Great Bend Park:

2,901

Glencoe Paddle Access:

2,914

Red Slide Park:

9,773

Graham Paddle Access:

3,549

Sweptonville River Park-Upper:

9,112

Sweptonville River Park-Lower:

9,783

Great Alamance Creek Access:

2,756

Sax. Lake Paddle Access:

3,626

Sax. Mill Race Paddle Access:

5,623

Total Attendance For Period:

59,311

TWO NEW PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS BUILD ROUTE FOR HRT

Two more important pieces were added to the land trail route this Fall with acquisitions south of Sweptonville and downstream from Saxapahaw. The first acquisition continues the trail from Sweptonville River Park south of Great Alamance Creek. This section is part of the longest stretch on the river without a bridge crossing, requiring the cooperation of a significant number of landowners on the west bank of the Haw. The second acquisition is an important property between Saxapahaw and existing Alamance County property near the landfill. This critical piece will help us join the existing trails is Saxapahaw to points south. Together, these new acquisitions add approximately half a mile to the HRT. The acquisition period in this area will continue through 2015, with construction slated to begin in 2015-16.



5280 CLUB SPONSORS PADDLE

A big thanks to all who attended the 5280 Club Sponsors Paddle at Altamahaw Paddle Access in November. We had fantastic weather and a great paddle on the Haw. Our first year of the 5280 Club adopt-a-mile program has been a big success. We look forward to more sponsors and sponsor-events in 2014.

For more information on the 5280 Club, contact Scott Reavis at 335/229-2230 or info@thehaw.org. If you are ready to adopt-a-mile please visit [the website](#) to sign up and choose your mile. We would love for you to join the club in time for our Spring Sponsors Paddle.





BIKE TRAIL NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS

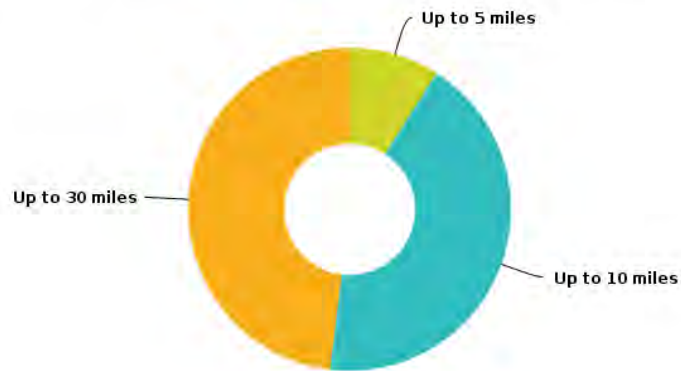
Alamance County had a tremendous response to the Bike Trail Needs Assessment survey this fall. Over 90% of respondents indicated there was a need for more off-road bicycle trails in the County with the greatest amount of respondents interested in beginner and intermediate level trails.

There are currently a very limited number of trails open to mountain bikes in the Haw River Trail system. Hopefully the positive survey results will help us provide more outlets for bike trails in the near future.

Full results of the survey are [available here](#). If you would like to contact Alamance County about the survey or future bike trail plans, please contact recinfo@alamance-nc.com.

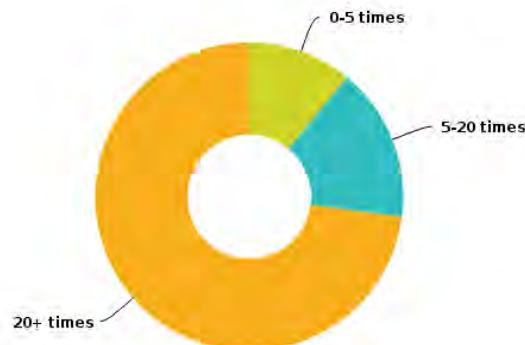
Q8 How far would you be willing to travel to access bike trails?

Answered: 154 Skipped: 2



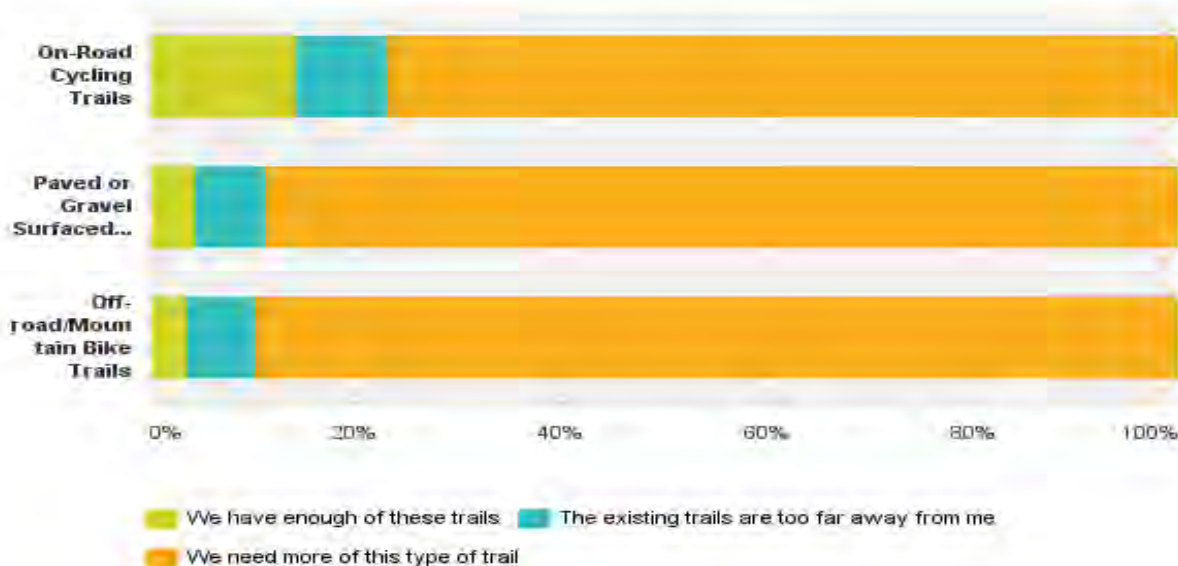
Q4 How many times have you ridden a bike recreationally in the past year?

Answered: 155 Skipped: 1



Q7 How do you feel about the current availability of bike trails in Alamance County

Answered: 157 Skipped: 8



Visit Us Online



The Haw River Trail is on Facebook! Click on the facebook logo above to "friend" us and get updates on news and events.



To see and share more pictures of the Haw River Trail, visit the Haw River Trail Group on Flickr.com.



www.thehaw.org

**Help Us Grow!
Buy Some Stuff!**

Help us meet our goals and show off your trail gear at the same time by giving the gift of Haw River Trail merchandise. These items are available online at shop.thehaw.org

**YEEEE-HAW!
Tech-Tees
\$15.00**



**HRT Hiking
Stick Medallion
\$5.00**



**HRT Bumper
Sticker
\$1.00**



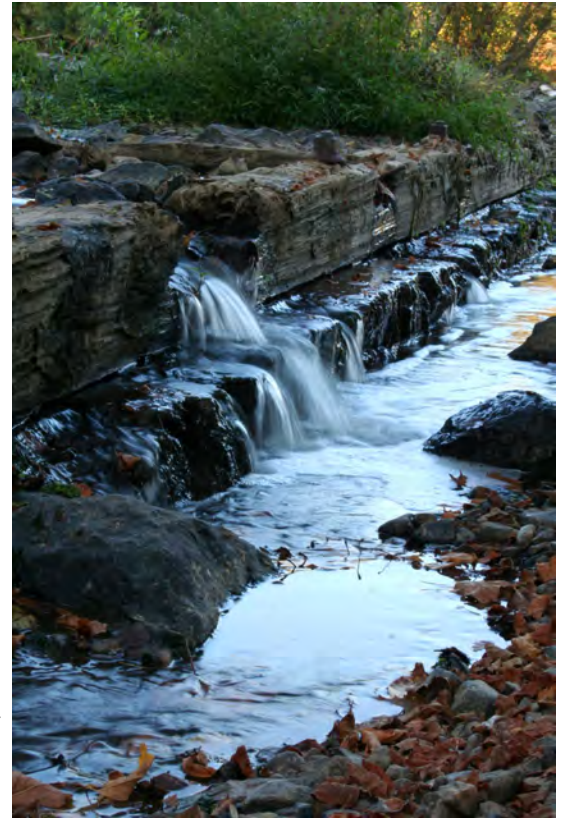
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SWEPSONVILLE - CONT. FROM PG.

A state senator from 1812-1818, Murphey championed a plan to make the State's rivers navigable to the ocean and to connect them via turnpikes. The plan called for the Haw to be made navigable via a network of sluices from Chatham to Rockingham Counties. The plan was never enacted due to the financial panic of 1819. The financial collapse of Murphey led to the acquisition of the property by Chief Justice Thomas Ruffin. The dam was swept away in a flood in 1831. Ruffin eventually found financial trouble of his own and the property was acquired at sheriff's auction by George W. Swepson. In 1868, Swepson began Falls Neuse Manufacturing Company on the east bank of the river. Swepson used mule-drawn and poled barges to transfer goods to the mills in Haw River. A dispute between Haw River Cotton Mills co-owners Thomas Holt and Adolphus Moore soon arose about the use of the name "Alamance Plaids." One January night in 1876, Moore was found shot in the head outside Swepson's home. Swepson was charged with murder, but later acquitted in a sensational trial. Following Swepson's death, Ashby Baker took over the mill. After it was destroyed by fire in 1892, Baker rebuilt the mill using slow-burn construction methods. When Baker's wife, Virginia died in 1893, he renamed the mill Virginia Cotton Mills. The name remained until the mill closed in 1970. It was destroyed by fire in 1989.

The remnants of the dam were removed through a cooperative project among the Town of Swepsonville, American Rivers and the US Army Corps of Engineers.



The Virginia Mill dam remnant before demolition.

MORE ON JUSTICE THOMAS RUFFIN

Regarded as one of the most important jurists in American history, Ruffin served on the North Carolina Supreme Court from 1816 to 1818 and from 1825 to 1828. A powerful exponent of judicial independence, Ruffin pioneered eminent domain, the right of the state to seize private property for the public good, and paved the way for the expansion of railroads into North Carolina, enabling the "Rip Van Winkle State" to embrace the industrial revolution. However, his most infamous opinion has become North Carolina v. Mann (1829), which sanctioned the "absolute" power of a master over a slave. Ruffin retired in 1852 to "The Hermitage" the plantation previously owned by his mentor Archibald Debow Murphey. In addition to his legal and political career, Ruffin was an innovative farmer, and was president of the state's Agricultural Society from 1854 to 1860.

