



THE MOUTH OF THE HAW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HAW RIVER TRAIL PARTNERSHIP

Summer 2016

What is the Haw River Trail Partnership?

The Haw River Trail Partnership was formed with the goal of helping the public enjoy and conserve the natural resources of the Haw River corridor.

The Partnership is the result of a signed Memorandum of Understanding between ten governmental agencies agreeing to work together for the development of trails along the river and conservation of the river and lands within the watershed.

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THE HRT IN SAXAPAHAW— NEW TRAIL, NEW PARK

It's been an exciting year for the Haw River Trail in Saxapahaw. We've shared a little about Saxapahaw Island Park but we now have more details available about what's happening in this section of trail and how all of the upcoming pieces of trail and park development will fit together.

In 2016, the HRT was awarded an \$84,000 grant from the Recreational Trails Program to develop a loop trail and trailhead on the Island, as well as HRT trail extensions to the north and south of the Island. Thanks to the acreage and easement donated by Waste Industries and the Clore family, respectively, the Island will enjoy almost 2 miles of trail. This loop will connect to new planned trail to the north of the Island, and to the existing and soon-to-be extended trail to the south across the river.

In addition to the hiking loop and trailhead, the new Saxapahaw Island Park will have an open formal gathering space that has been cleared by goat grazing; an informal gathering space that will contain a boardwalk and seating; a waterfront area with a deck overlooking the Haw River; and a nature play area. The gathering spaces and waterfront area are supported by community involvement and funds from Alamance Parks. The official site plan, hand drawn and painted by artist Dr. Elizabeth Bradshaw, shows our vision for the Island Park (see below).

Continued on page 2...

Saxapahaw Island Park



Legend

- | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Nature Play Area | 3. Informal Gathering Area | 5. Trailhead | 7. Lookout Point |
| 2. Waterfront Area | 4. Trails | 6. Formal Gathering Area | 8. Existing Haw River Trail |



THE HRT IN SAXAPAHAW— CONTINUED...

Pine Trees

North Carolina Pine Trees

There are eight species of pine trees native to NC. Four are found in Alamance County: shortleaf pine, loblolly pine, Virginia pine, and pond pine. In nearby counties you can find pitch pine and eastern white pine. Table mountain pine is found in western NC and longleaf pine in southeastern NC.

How Old is that Tree?

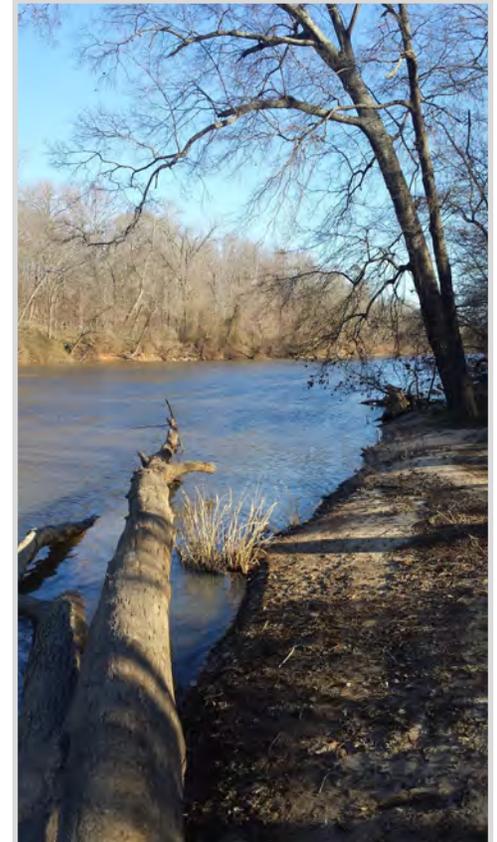
Annually, a pine tree will grow one central bud surrounded by a ring of buds at the top of the trunk. So, on an adult tree, each layer of branches (called a whorl) represents one year of growth. Count the number of branch layers on a pine tree, add 4 to account for the pine's seedling years, and you will know the age of the tree!

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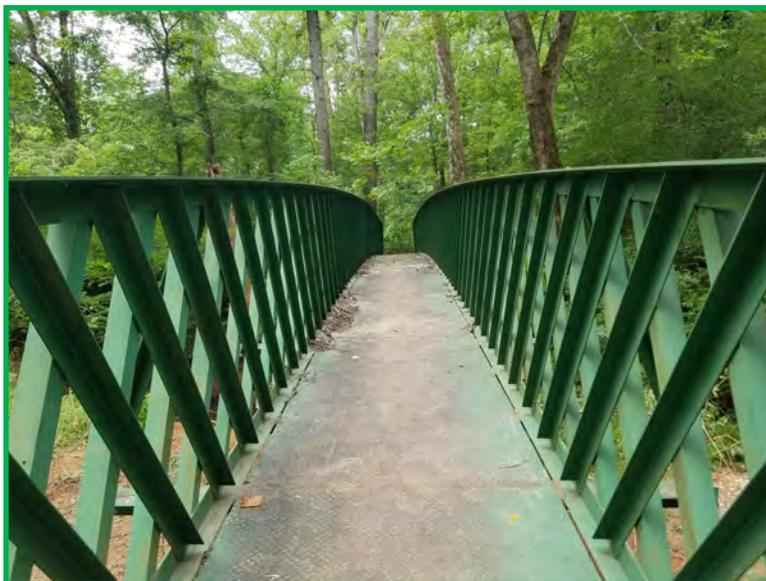
We are happy to announce we have also received a \$100,000 grant from Impact Alamance to fund the nature play area. One of Impact Alamance's primary objectives is to improve access to and quality of built play environments in our community. Currently, planned features include a central play structure shaped like a Bowfin fish that will offer multiple play elements; swings; a spider-web rope climber; outdoor musical play; a water sluice; a climbing wall; a fort building area; and balance beams connecting these play nodes. Each play feature will help children connect with and learn about natural elements of the Haw River ecosystem, with interpretive signage for each play node.

We also have exciting news for expansion of the trail south of the Island. The HRT recently received a generous donation from Buckner Companies in the form a beautiful new bridge that will allow extension of the trail past a previously unnavigable ravine, connecting existing trail to the new planned extension.

Between the Island loop and the north/south extensions, the new trail developments will bring almost 4 miles of additional HRT to the Saxapahaw area. If you are interested in volunteering to help build trail, maintain trail, or work with the community group involved with the Island Park elements, please email info@thehaw.org.



View from the future waterfront deck area of Saxapahaw Island Park.



New bridge on the HRT, south of Saxapahaw Island.

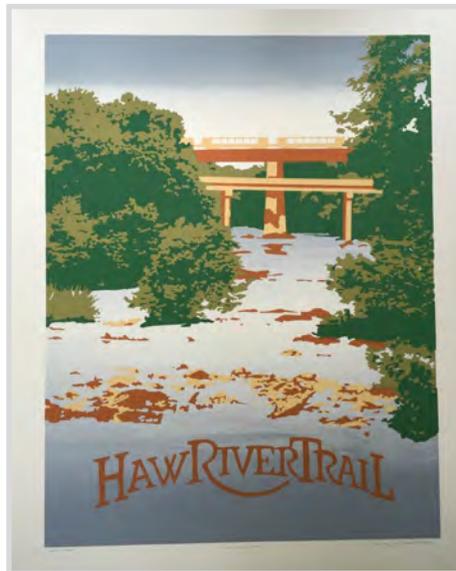
As with the trails and trailhead, construction and installation for the play area will begin this winter. We tentatively look forward to a grand opening of the Saxapahaw Island Park in June 2017. A big thanks to the Recreational Trails Program, Impact Alamance, Alamance Parks, and Buckner Steel for their contributions to supporting the HRT in Saxapahaw, as well as to community members and local businesses whose support of our events has helped raise additional funds for this exciting new park.



THE HRT INTRODUCES NEW ART SERIES

The Haw River Trail is excited to announce that we now have custom silk screen art prints capturing the beauty of the trail. We hope to offer a series of pieces showcasing the natural history and culture of the Haw River. A huge thank you to local artists and Haw River Trail supporters Ron and Rosa Rozelle for sharing their time and talent to create the first of these works of art, a view of the Haw River from Red Slide Park. These limited edition prints are hand signed and numbered. We look forward to having a grand reveal later on this summer, so keep an eye out for an email notice about this event.

We are looking for local artists who are interested in working on the next pieces in the Haw River Trail art series. If you are interested in purchasing a print or working on a piece for the series, please contact us at info@thehaw.org. All proceeds support the Haw River Trail.



THE 5280 CLUB

We've had a lot of questions about what the 5280 Club is. At its most basic, it is an adopt-a-mile of trail program whose name is derived from the fact that one mile is equal to 5280 feet. More importantly, the Club is a way for families and businesses to show support for the trail while helping us continue to grow the trail, and to connect members of the community with the HRT Partnership.

For a donation of \$100, you adopt your favorite mile of land or paddle trail for one year. Your name, or the name of your business, will be displayed on a sign at the trailhead/paddle access that provides access to that mile of trail. You will receive a certificate, a photo of your chosen mile of trail, and an invitation for you and a friend to our 5280 members-only events. These include a group hike in early summer and a Fall Color Paddle in the fall. Donations are tax deductible. We rely on sponsorships and donations to help support continuing work on the HRT and look forward to revitalizing this program. To join or for more info, please email info@thehaw.org.

HRT T-SHIRTS

The HRT has new T-shirts! With the HRT logo badge on the front and the HRT trail blaze and motto on the back, these shirts are available in two different colors- blue and grey.

Shirts are \$15 and available in adult S-XL. Proceeds support the trail. Please contact info@thehaw.org to place an order, or look for them at upcoming HRT events.



Quarterly
Attendance at Haw
River Trail Sites

Feb. 2016-May 2016

Altamahaw Paddle
Access (PA)
8,218

Shallow Ford
Natural Area
12,521

Great Bend Park
5,342

Glencoe PA
3,551

Red Slide Park
8,997

Graham PA
5,605

Sweptonville River
Park-Upper
15,475

Sweptonville River
Park-Lower
11,067

Great Alamance
Creek PA
3,744

Sax. Lake PA
9,999

Sax. Mill Race PA
12,760

Union Bridge PA
748

Total Quarterly
Attendance:
98,027

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Plant Life Cycles

What are annuals, biennials, and perennials?

These terms refer to a plant's life cycle, or the time it takes to grow from seed to vegetation, to flowering and reseed, and then death. Here we explain the basic differences, though there are other subtle complexities.

An **annual plant** completes its life cycle within one year. A **biennial plant** takes two years- the first year is for vegetative growth (roots and foliage), the second for flowers, seed, and death.

A **perennial plant's** life cycle can take two or more years. Unlike annuals or biennials, the parent plant of a perennial does not die after producing seeds.

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THE WILDFLOWER MEADOW AT SHALLOW FORD NATURAL AREA

Did you know there's a wildflower meadow at Shallow Ford Natural Area? With the arrival of warm weather, the flowers have been blooming and it's a great time to visit. Early flowers began to really show their colors in May. As the season has progressed, you can now see Black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia hirta*), Blanket Flowers (*Gaillardia* spp.), and more. Last year we enjoyed some stunning giant sunflowers (*Helianthus* spp.) and widespread Cosmos (*Cosmos* spp.) in all shades of purple and pink. What's special this year is that we are seeing the first blooms from biennials planted last year, and some of our perennials.



The Blanket Flower (Gaillardia spp.), still blooming at the meadow through the summer.

The Observation Deck located on the Basin Creek Trail (Orange Trail) was built in 2015 to overlook an old field that has been converted into this home for wildflowers and wildlife. Last year, steps were taken to establish the wildflower meadow by seeding a portion of the area with a 60/40 perennial/annual mix. This year, a 70/30 perennial/annual mix was added to help finish establishing the field. Each year, a different annual mix will be added for variety and experimentation. The meadow is set up so you can enjoy a panoramic view from the observation deck, or immerse yourself in the flowers by strolling mown paths between the different sections.

The meadow creates an amazing ecosystem attracting all kinds of wildlife. In fact, this was one of the criteria in the original flower selection. Not only did we want flowers that show well and are hardy survivors, we also wanted to attract wildlife for observers to enjoy. Seed mixes were carefully selected

to include plants both native to this area and from nearby regions. Some of the selected wildflowers are actually improved varieties of native wildflowers, meaning they've been bred from the original wild-type to have desirable qualities such as drought tolerance or nicer blooms.



The Observation Deck surrounded by last year's colorful Cosmos (Cosmos spp.).



WILDFLOWER MEADOW– *CONTINUED...*

The fun result of mixing perennials, annuals, and biennials is that this variety allows the meadow to have both more constantly-established flowers and a mix of flowers that will come and go depending on what is seeded in a given year. So the biennial Sweet Williams (*Dianthus barbatus*) you see this year might not be there next year- unless we planted new Sweet William seeds this year! You'll just have to come back and see...

The full version of this article is available on the Alamance Parks blog at <http://www.alamance-nc.com/recreation/2016/05/11/wildflowers/>. It offers more detail about the plants and insects you can see at the meadow; an in-depth explanation of the different plant cycles; additional photos from the meadow; and links to resources for plant and insect enthusiasts.

SUCCESS! THE 2ND ANNUAL TRAILATHLON AND THE 9TH ANNUAL YEEHAW! RIVER PADDLE

Thank you to everyone who came out and supported our two HRT benefits this year. The Trailathlon and YeeHaw! River Paddle were both hugely successful. The Trailathlon, in spite of it's weather-induced delay from last November, enjoyed almost 60 participants who bravely tackled a 2 mile round-trip paddle on Saxapahaw Lake (pictured below), a 7 mile bike ride, and a hilly 5K trail run. The group gathered after the event to enjoy food and drink at The Eddy Pub & Restaurant. The 9th Annual YeeHaw! River Paddle put 75 people on the Haw for a beautiful afternoon on the section of river from Saxapahaw Mill Race Paddle Access down to Union Bridge Paddle Access, our newest paddle access which completes the paddle trail through Alamance County. This is an exciting stretch of about 5 miles of intermittent rapids and excellent views of the river and its wildlife– a number of participants saw Bald Eagles during the trip! Event photos are available on the HRT Facebook page.

We would also like to thank our sponsors for both events, whose support ensured that the funds raised will go towards continuing work on the HRT. In addition to our partner agencies in Burlington and Graham, this year's event sponsors included Haw River Canoe & Kayak Company, River Run Outfitters, Three Rivers Outfitters, The Eddy Pub & Restaurant, Saxapahaw United Methodist Church, The Bridge at Rivermill, Upper Chatham Lower Alamance Community Circle, Haw River Ranch, Saxapahaw General Store, Performance Bike, REI, Blue Ribbon Diner, Asheville Signarama, and the Great Outdoor Provision Company. **Everyone's support and participation this year raised over \$3,300 for the trail!**



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UPCOMING EVENTS

TRAIL BENEFITS

TRAILATHLON- FALL 2016

November 2016, Date/Time TBD

| Saxapahaw |

Join the Haw River Trail and the Community of Saxapahaw for the 3rd Annual Trailathlon. This multi-sport adventure race brings together families and athletes of all abilities and skill levels to enjoy the Haw River. The untimed race includes a paddle, hike, and bike portion. Proceeds support the Haw River Trail. Details will be announced soon.



COMMUNITY TRAIL ACTIVITIES

WALKABOUTS

Come for a journey through the woods and satisfy your need to get out and explore, or just enjoy the good feeling of a nice walk. Join us on walkabout as we explore local hiking hot-spots, many of which are part of the Haw River Trail. Hikes are about 3 miles on natural surface trails. Dogs and kids (10+) welcome - ages 16 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Sponsored by Burlington Recreation & Parks. Free, but registration is required online at www.BurlingtonNC.gov/Outdoors.

Tuesday, August 2 from 6:00 - 7:30 pm
Haw River Trail at Stoney Creek Marina
1798 Faulkner Dr. Burlington, NC 27217

A total of 2 miles out-and-back on the Haw River Trail. Natural surface, rolling terrain. We will traverse one steep section so we recommend a hiking stick or trekking pole.

Tuesday, August 16 from 6:00 - 7:30 pm
Rock Creek Trail at Cedarock Park
4242 R. Dean Coleman Rd., Burlington, NC 27215

A 2 mile loop winding through the woods on natural surface trail with rolling terrain and a few steep hills. Appropriate for all fitness levels. Restrooms near trailhead. Meet in the parking area just beyond the playground.

WIN A T-SHIRT!

We'd like to know what you think about our newsletter. Your feedback can help us make sure we are providing you with the content you want to read. Take our brief online survey to be entered for a chance to win one of the new HRT T-shirts!

Survey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/hrtnewsletter>

**For questions, comments, or to add/remove your name to/from the HRT mailing list, email info@thehaw.org.
Visit us at www.facebook.com/hawrivertrail.**

What is the Haw River Trail?

Founded on the idea of conservation through recreation, the Haw River Trail (HRT) is a land and paddle trail connecting Haw River State Park to Jordan Lake State Recreation Area. Much of the trail is still under development.

The trail captures the natural resources, history, and culture of Alamance County and the surrounding region, and serves as a critical resource for connecting the community to its heritage.

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