

Sanford Trails and Urban Forestry Committee
Annual Report for 2022
Submitted by Lawrence Furbish, Committee Chair

The officers for the year were: Chair, Lawrence Furbish, Vice-Chair, Hazen Carpenter, Secretary, Thom Gagne, Treasurer, Brady Lloyd.

The additional members of the Committee were: Albert Alexander, Dollie Hutchins, Kevin McKeon, Katie Manende-Hall, Sam Parady, Dave Parent, Al Pollard, and Jeff Wells.

The Trails Committee had a very busy and productive year with members putting in almost 700 volunteer hours of service. Thanks to the members for their commitment to the committee and the Sanford trails system. The trails are a great asset to the City and they only exist and thrive because of the dedication of our members.

During the year at our meetings, we hosted Jordan Wilson to discuss communication and outreach with the City; Colleen Adams to talk about how to best react to the unhoused on or near our trail system; Lee Burnett to discuss working together with Cycle Sanford on issues of importance to bikers; and Andre Brousseau to discuss the trails and the birding (sewerage settling) ponds.

We arranged for the Boy Scouts to hold their Klondike Derby at Gowen Park and the Mousam Way Trail. It was a very successful event with 175 participating scouts and 20 sleds.

The Committee supported the proposed Recreational Trails Program Grant to complete a loop trail around the new High School and committed \$5,480 for our share of the required matching funds.

We made contact with the State Department of Transportation regarding the proposed rebuild of the Route 4 bridge over the Mousam River with the goal of having an underpass constructed to allow foot and bike traffic to pass under the bridge rather than having to cross the Route 4 roadway which is very busy. This effort is on hold as we work with the city to develop a unified approach on this project. This will facilitate a major goal from our Master Plan which is to connect with the Eastern Trail in Kennebunk or Wells. This significant walking and bike trail runs from Kennebunk to South Portland with plans for it to extend to Kittery and Portland. It is part of the East Coast Greenway which runs from Key West, Florida to Cali, Maine.

One of our major future goals will be to secure a recreational easement for the quarter mile stretch of the sewer line trail along the Mousam from the Mousam Way Land Trust below the High School to Route 4. This will close a gap and bring us closer to connecting with the Eastern Trail.

We are working with the Sanford Sewerage District to develop a way to connect our trail from the Route 4 Bridge down to the settling ponds so we can continue on behind the industrial park toward Route 99 and beyond as part of our goal to connect with the Eastern Trail.

We upgraded the parking lot on Stanley Road at the entrance to Mousam Way North and moved a large sign and map from the Middle School to this location.

Other activities and accomplishments in 2022 were

- Added gravel and graded the trails around the dog park, the Armory, and the YMCA.
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- Partnered with the Sno-Goers snowmobile club to improve the Farm Trail north of Blanchard Road to allow snowmobiles there and other trail users in the non-snow months.
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- Supported the RAISE Grant and its subsequent approval and implementation. This will bring about significant progress toward the connectivity goals in our Trails Master Plan
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- Approved a proposal by Randy White to create a new mountain bike bypass between Holdsworth Park and the Leap aimed at beginning and intermediate mountain bikers. This new trail was completed.
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- Fostered a Memorandum of Understanding between the City, The Native Plant Trust, and the Three Rivers Land Trust to develop a trail between the Community Forest on Oak Street and the Rhododendron Preserve. We committed \$4,167 to match a grant to develop this trail which will give much better and easier access for people to visit the preserve.

We were finally able to begin construction on the upgrade of the Mousam Way South and Bike Path trail head on lower School Street near the City Public Works office. A culvert has been installed. The fence still needs to be moved and then granite and gravel can be laid for the new parking area. Significant funding for this project will come from the Sanford Kiwanis Mousam Way Letourneau Trail Fund.

We continue to work on the Middle School bike path connector which would link up existing bike paths from Main and River Streets. A plan that called for a path separated from the existing street went through Site Plan Review a few years ago and was approved. Then it was suggested that it would be easier to have the path run on the existing street for part of the way and we pursued that option for a while. The School Department then raised objections that because of parents in cars picking up and dropping off their children it would not be safe without some sort of physical barrier and that a barrier would impede snow removal. We are now back at looking at the original plan for the separate path.

We have a pending project on Mousam Way North near the Leap to improve a woods road/path and construct a bridge over a Mousam tributary. We are waiting on DEP approval.

During the year we conducted a number of smaller scale maintenance activities which included:

- replacing bricks on the crosswalk on Bridge Street at Mousam Way Park in Springvale.
- rebuilding a bridge over a Mousam River tributary near the Leap.
- repairing the Boardwalk on Mousam Way South Trail.
- replacing a number of missing and faded Historic Trail signs in Springvale and Sanford.
- trimming trees and brush along the Rail Trail.
- improved the signage on Mousam Way North.
- repairing the benches at Mousam Way Kiwanis Park.

We amended our Bylaws to deal with the issue of inactive members who do not attend meetings.

The interest of Sanford's citizens in our trails system continues to grow as our Facebook page now has 2,282 likes and our Instagram page has 466 followers.

Finally, I want to thank the City, especially Steve Buck, Matt Hill, and Brady Lloyd as well as the City Council for their support both financial and otherwise. It is greatly appreciated.