



# Hooksett Conservation Commission

## Explore. Protect. Reconnect.

Town of Hooksett  
35 Main Street  
Hooksett, NH 03106  
July 14, 2023

## 2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

### Year Highlights:

- Awarded an \$80,000 grant from NH Parks for the **Hooksett Riverwalk Trail**.
- Determined the lay-out and steps required for the fourth and final phase of the **Hooksett Riverwalk Trail** to satisfy a long-term goal of creating a regional trail connector to Allenstown.
- Organized an Earth Day Clean-up event at **Clay Pond Headwaters Conservation Area**.
- Contracted with a firm to mark boundaries at **Head's Pond Conservation Area**, before trail work and stewardship can commence.
- Completed blazing the **Pinnacle Park** trail loop that was built out last year. Hosted a volunteer group from Stantec to install a water bar on a washed out portion of trail and to remove invasive species choking out trees and trails (bittersweet).
- Completed the third and final year of invasive species removal at **Quimby Mountain**, the first steps in a longer term effort to develop a trail system in this area.

### *Hooksett Riverwalk Trail—Brick Kiln Historic Trail Loop*

The Conservation Commission was awarded an \$80,000 grant by the **NH State Parks Recreational Trails Program (RTP)** to construct the fourth and final phase of the Hooksett Riverwalk Trail. This phase satisfies a long-term goal of forming a regional trail connector to the Allenstown border.

This phase consists of 2,910 feet of 12-foot wide gravel, multi-use trail. It includes a wooden boardwalk and an agricultural bridge over wetlands.



*\$80,000 awarded from RTP*

The final trail system will consist of 7,385 feet (nearly 1-1/2 miles) of 12- and 8-foot wide crushed gravel, and includes approximately 750 feet of bridges and boardwalks.

Project engineering and design is being handled by Stantec. In conjunction with Stantec, HCC met with members of the Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF), the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES), and the Allenstown leadership team for a site walk and plan review.

A **Natural Heritage Bureau** review, conducted in June '22, identified four endangered and threatened vertebrate species on this site. This review is used during permitting and construction and is required for grant applications. Beaver management, trail and wetland management, and mowing of the fields and habitats continues with oversight from SPNHF and DES.



*Four new benches were added along the trail for a total of seven benches*

### ***Head's Pond Conservation Area: Marking Boundaries for Stewardship Work***

A Stewardship Plan was developed for the Head's Pond Conservation Area in 2021, but before trail work or any other activities can begin in this vast area (438 acres of conservation land), boundaries needed to be surveyed and marked.

The HCC contracted with S&H Land Services, LLC, a professional land surveyor firm located in Hooksett, to ensure boundaries are in accordance with property deeds. Also, some encroachments and violations were discovered during this process, including: a hunting platform, garden encroachments by abutters, a fence encroachment, and general trash, sandbags, and debris. All offenders have been notified and the conservation boundaries are being marked with monuments for clear identification.



## *Pinnacle Park Trail Blazing, a Volunteer Event, and Stolen Signage*

Members of the HCC blazed the trails at Pinnacle Park, marking the new trail loop constructed last year through a partnership with the Student Conservation Commission (SCA). New signs were erected in this area, but unfortunately three of those six signs have disappeared. Signs and blazing identify trails and locations for visitors, and areas closed due to erosion.

The HCC hosted a volunteer event with **Stantec** in June. Stantec arranged for a group of 12 volunteers, who installed a water bar on a trail incline to prevent wash-out. They also removed bittersweet that was choking off the entrance to the new trail loop and damaging trees. Poison ivy was removed from picnic areas.

Thank you for your hard work, Stantec volunteers!

DPW added to the efforts by filling in and smoothing out eroded areas of the parking lot with stones. Great work by all!



*Stolen signs at Pinnacle Park*



*Stantec volunteers and HCC member John Pieroni*

## *Clay Pond Headwaters Conservation Area: Unlawful Shooting Range and Gates Destroyed*

This year our focus turned to an area of Clay Pond taken over by an unlawful target shooting range. Trees had been destroyed, lots of junk and trash had been left behind (including hazardous materials such as propane tanks and old paint cans), and the area had been cleared for target shooters.

The first plan of attack was to erect signage at the Clay Pond entrance and the shooting range warning offenders of the consequences and penalties (up to a Class B felony). Bear-Paw Regional Greenways assisted in this effort.

Secondly, the HCC contacted the Hooksett Police Department and Fish & Game, who both agreed to spend more time and attention on this area.





Next, this area became the focus of our Earth Day Clean-up in April. HCC members and the Boy Scouts helped clear the shooting range and surrounding areas of trash, dumping, and debris, and restored the site to its more natural state.

We cannot save trees that have been destroyed but fire pits have been cleared and disassembled. After the clean-up, the area was blocked off, thanks to help from DPW, by hauling large, downed trees and limbs across the entrance.



*Trash, propane tanks, paint cans, and more collected*



*A dump truck full of old tires was removed from the area!*

Thank you to the dads and Boy Scouts from Troop 292!! Also, thanks to Dale with DPW for assistance with the large truck! This large-scale clean-up could not have been done without all of you!

Finally, we are working with Manchester Water Works to repair the gates that have been destroyed. In addition, game cameras will be installed to identify people who are breaking the law and destroying property in this sensitive wildlife area.



*Volunteers from Bear-Paw inspect the damage to the gates at Clay Pond*

## *Quimby Mountain Invasive Species Removal*

Work resumed this spring and summer on invasive species removal at the Quimby Mountain conservation area by Paul Eaton with Keep It Native. Species of concern include Japanese knotweed and bittersweet, which are taking over and choking out trails in this area. An HCC member joined Eaton for a site walk and discussion of the work to be performed.

## *Land acquisition and conservation projects*

With greater than 25 percent of town land conserved, the HCC is **focusing on stewardship, trail expansion and enhancements, signage, and educational opportunities**. Hooksett 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 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.

## *Hooksett Conservation Blog*

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

Conservation Commission website: <https://www.hooksett.org/conservation-commission>

HCC Blog: <https://hooksettconservationcommissionblog.wordpress.com/>

Respectfully submitted,

Chair: Cindy Robertson

Vice Chair: JoCarol Woodburn

Members: Robert Better, Phil Fitanides,  
Deborah Miville

Alternate Members: John Pieroni,  
Dr. Alan Stein

Planning Board Representative:  
Sheena Gilbert

Town Council Representative:  
Alex Walczyk

Staff Support: Bridgette Grotheer

