



THE MOUTH OF THE HAW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HAW RIVER TRAIL PARTNERSHIP

Fall 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.

Conservation
through
recreation

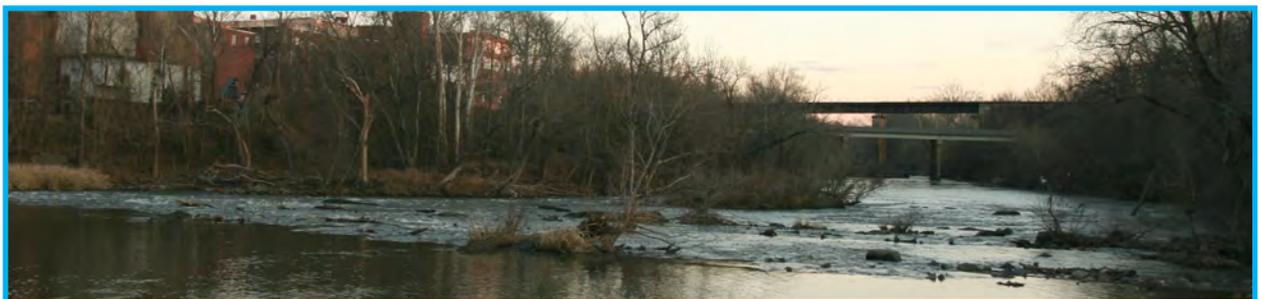
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DAM REMOVAL AT RED SLIDE

Last month, American Rivers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service teamed up to remove the remnants of Granite Mill Dam from the Haw River by Ride Slide Park. The dam was located just upriver from the Highway 49 bridge in the Town of Haw River. Granite Mill was a cotton mill built in the mid-1800s known for its production of Alamance Plaid cloth and used into the 1900s to power the area's textile mill industry. The dam was torn down and rebuilt several times, but debris from the foundation remained in the river. Looking from Red Slide Park across to the Cone Fabrics smoke stacks, the dam would've run straight across the river. The rubble was removed to improve public safety, expand recreation opportunities, and improve river health.

Over the last two centuries, thousands of dams were and continue to be built along U.S. rivers and their tributaries to benefit the communities around them. Dams are an important part of our cultural history, particularly here in Alamance County. They have been used for harnessing hydroelectric power for mills and homes, irrigating farm lands, controlling floods, and providing reservoirs for drinking water. However, they do change the natural characteristics of our waterways and can have negative consequences for river ecosystems in terms of wildlife habitat, water quality, and recreation. Removing unneeded dams or remnants in poor condition such as those at Red Slide can have a positive impact on the river's health. It also allows for kayakers and canoers to safely paddle the river without having to avoid going over any falls, hit dangerous remnants of an old dam, or get pinned in the debris. The Haw River is also home to the endangered Cape Fear Shiner, and fish like these will now have more freedom to swim up and downriver with fewer impediments.

Thank you to American Rivers for sharing information from their article *Haw River Healthier Without Granite Mill Dam*, authored by Erin Singer McCombs (Associate Director of Southeast Conservation) and their blog post *How Dams Damage Rivers*. You can access these articles on the American Rivers website (www.americanrivers.org) for more information.



The river at Red Slide park before (top) and after (bottom, photo adapted from American Rivers) removal of the Granite Mill Dam remnants. The arrows point to the remnants from the dam that were taken out of the river.



Fall Color

The Colors

Three types of pigments make up the color in tree leaves. Chlorophyll makes leaves appear green during spring and summer.

Carotenoids appear yellow, orange, and brown. Present all year, they are masked by chlorophyll in spring and summer.

Anthocyanins, produced in Fall, are responsible for beautiful reds and purples.

The Change

As days shorten and temperatures drop, chlorophyll levels decrease and trees begin to close off the veins that feed leaves. This prepares them to drop leaves and conserve resources during winter months. With less chlorophyll, the oranges, yellows, and browns are unmasked, and anthocyanins produce the reds and purples.

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TALKING WITH A TRAIL STEWARD

The Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail offers a Trail Stewards program for individuals dedicated to helping maintain the quality and safety of the Mountains-to-Sea/Haw River Trail. We talked to a local Trail Steward in Alamance County to share his story with people who might be interested in taking care of the Trail. Mr. Bob Ellis is a retired Presbyterian minister who moved to Alamance County three years ago to be near his family. Bob has now been working with the FMST for two and a-half years. His hobbies include nurturing his four grandkids, studying the history of the water-powered mills in Alamance County, woodworking, and building and maintaining the MST/HRT. Here's what he told us about his experience as a Trail Steward:

Why and how did you get involved with the FMST?

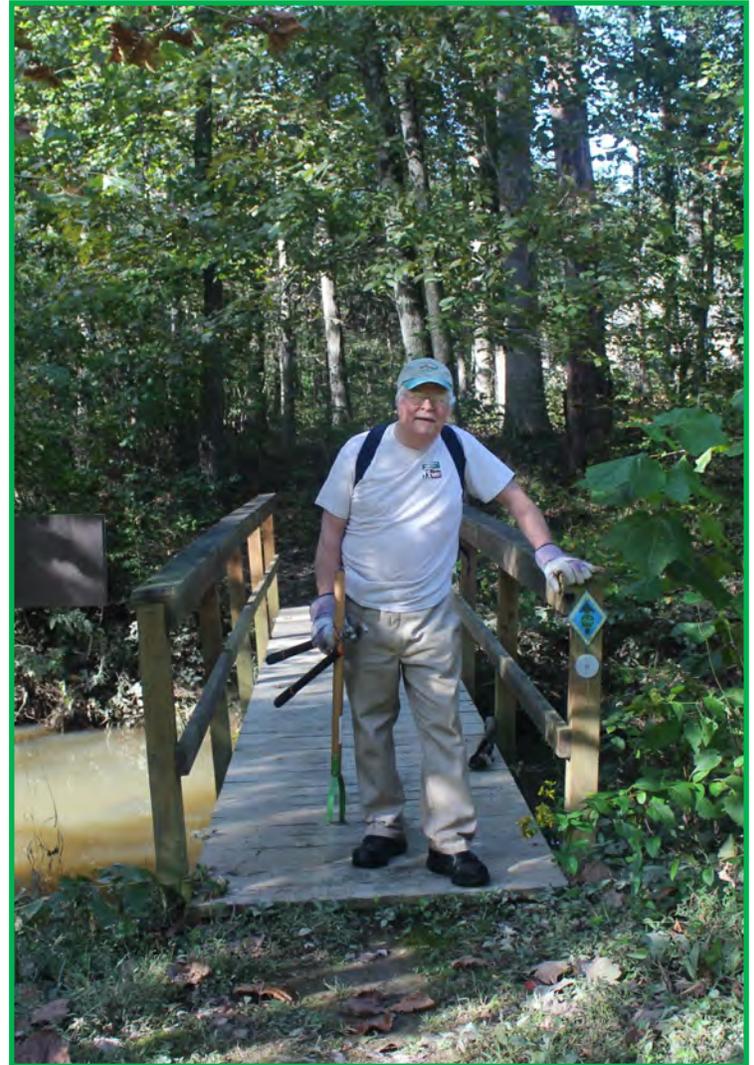
When I first moved to Alamance County I explored the opportunities for outdoor engagement. After working in an office environment for twenty-six years prior to retirement, I craved to be more out-of-doors and physically engaged. The FMST/HRT partnership was an excellent chance to be closer to nature, obtain some healthy exercise in an outdoor environment, join with other individuals in constructing a state-wide hiking trail, and leave a legacy for my grandkids and others to enjoy in future generations.

Approximately how many volunteer hours have you logged in trail work?

Last year I logged about ninety hours in direct MST/HRT trail construction and maintenance. However, when I am doing my morning hikes on any of the parks or trails I generally clear branches and debris off whichever trail I am hiking on. I do not "log" this time since it is not part of any formal maintenance program; I simply can't walk by if a branch or limb is impeding the trail!

Do you have a favorite memory from your time spent with FMST volunteers out on the trail?

I have many fond memories of my trail work over the last two and a-half years. Working with other members of the FMST crew has been a great experience as we learn from and banter with each other. I suppose my favorite memories are related to building pedestrian bridges along the Sellers



Bob Ellis on the Haw River Trail equipped for a trail maintenance hike. (Photo courtesy of Bob Ellis)



TALKING WITH A TRAIL STEWARD— *CONTINUED...*

Falls section of trail last year. We became pretty skilled at bridge construction (we built nine bridges along this section of trail) and five of us could construct a 24-foot bridge in about five hours - once we had the materials on-site.

How often are you out hiking and checking the trails?

I typically hike about three miles a day to maintain my physical health, and I vary my hikes among the various parks and trails in Alamance, Orange, and Guilford Counties. I walk sections of the MST/HRT at least once a week and check the three-mile section, for which myself and two other individuals are Trail Stewards, at least once a month.

Do you have any words of encouragement to those reading the newsletter, for them to get out and volunteer?

Trail-building is not only a wonderful way to obtain exercise and see scenic parts of Alamance County, it is also an opportunity to meet people of all ages and backgrounds as we labor together to create a new trail across North Carolina. We each work at our own pace as members of small teams to clear brush, prune overhanging limbs, remove downed logs, and remove rocks and protruding roots as we build a meter-wide trail through the county. I have become more aware of varieties of soils and topography as we navigate hills and ravines and creeks along the Haw River. I have learned how to safely carry and use a variety of tools as we construct trails with minimal impact on the environment. I have met wonderful people committed to building community and a better county. Boy Scouts, Elon students, retired folks, and a broad variety of people come together to create a legacy that costs the taxpayers of North Carolina very little. It is a great model of what people can do by working together! We invite folks with no trail-building experience to join us. . . they will find themselves addicted to the out-of-doors.



In addition to Trail Stewards, we rely on the public and additional volunteers to help keep the river and trails clean. The Alamance County 4H Club recently organized a cleanup day on the land that will become Saxapahaw Island Park. Altogether the crew hauled off around 10 full bags of trash and



one very waterlogged block of foam cushion. A huge thanks to Caroline Newlin for organizing the cleanup event, and to the 4-H Club for their hard work! We also thank Bob and his fellow volunteers for their important efforts.

If you are interested in building trail, becoming a Trail Steward, or organizing a cleanup day with your friends or an organization you belong to, please contact Guil Johnson at info@thehaw.org or (336) 229-2380.

The Alamance County 4H Club cleaning up in Saxapahaw.

Quarterly
Attendance at Haw
River Trail Sites

June 2016-Sept 2016

Altamahaw Paddle
Access (PA)
7,343

Shallow Ford
Natural Area
8,868

Great Bend Park
5,592

Glencoe PA
2,387

Red Slide Park
10,005

Graham PA
6,303

Sweepsonville River
Park-Upper
18,699

Sweepsonville River
Park-Lower
13,346

Great Alamance
Creek PA
3,965

Sax. Lake PA
8,964

Sax. Mill Race PA
9,421

Union Bridge PA
1,511

Total Quarterly
Attendance:
96,404

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ART FOR THE TRAIL

The Haw River Trail's new annual art series kicked off with an Art Gala in Saxapahaw on September 20th to showcase the first piece in the series. This silk-screened art print is the creation of Saxapahaw artists Ron Rozzelle and Rosa Patton, donated to the Haw River Trail to help raise funds and awareness of the Trail. The poster shows a view of the Haw River from Red Slide Park. Ron and Rosa are long-time friends of the Trail, having donated land as well as their artistic talents in support of the HRT. The prints were inspired by the art of Chester Don Powell who created iconic posters of national parks for the Works Progress Administration during the Depression. The Haw River Trail has numbered art prints as well as artist proofs available for purchase. We are asking a \$125 minimum donation for the numbered prints and \$300 for the artist proofs. All proceeds support the Trail, particularly development of the new Saxapahaw Island Park.

The Art Gala was a great success, raising over \$2,000 for the Trail and sparking additional art print purchases. To date, the prints have raised approximately \$3,000 for the Trail. We would like to thank the artists for their continued support of the trail, everyone who attended the event or purchased a print, and the Eddy for hosting the Gala. The Haw River Trail is also looking for artists interested in donating their time and talent to create next year's piece for the series. If you are interested in purchasing a print or working on a future HRT art piece, please contact us at info@thehaw.org or call (336) 229-2380.

UPCOMING EVENTS

TRAILATHLON

November 12, 2016, 8:30am-finish
| Saxapahaw |

Join the Haw River Trail and the community of Saxapahaw for the 3rd Annual Trailathlon, the Haw River Trail's Fall fundraiser. The event brings together families and athletes of all abilities and skill levels to enjoy the natural recreation opportunities of the Haw River corridor. This multi-sport adventure race starts with a two-mile round trip paddle on Saxapahaw Lake, followed by a seven-mile rolling countryside bike ride, and finishes with a hilly 5K trail run.

The race is untimed and is intended to draw appreciation for the Haw River Trail, the Haw River, and surrounding communities. There will be a pre-race yoga session at 8:30am and then the race will have a rolling start from 9:00-9:30am. Trailathlon Central will be located behind Haw River Canoe & Kayak Company (6079 Swepsonville-Saxapahaw Rd, Graham, NC 27253).



All proceeds support the Haw River Trail's new Saxapahaw Island Park. Registration is open online at alamance.recdesk.com. For more information please visit the Trailathlon Facebook Event Page (www.facebook.com/hawrivertrail) or call (336) 229-2380.

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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