

June 25, 2018

Helen Mahan  
Program Manager  
RTCA Program, Northeast Region  
National Park Service  
U.S. Dept. of the Interior

**Subject:** Request for Second Year of RTCA Program Community Assistance – Hallowell Recreation Area

Dear Program Manager Mahan:

Please accept this request for an extension of the RTCA Program Community Assistance for the Hallowell Recreation Area in Hallowell, Maine.

#### Introduction

This request is for the current RTCA project, **Hallowell Recreation Area** (aka, the RES). We are requesting the continuation of RTCA community assistance with the National Park Service for the project year 2018-2019. The initial award of the RTCA assistance was for project year 2017-2018.

The project goal is to create a partnership between the City of Hallowell and diverse stakeholders to develop a high-level roadmap for the Hallowell Recreation Area including conservation of natural resources while improving access to a sustainable system of multi-use trails and recreational opportunities.

After a short delay of award notification, the project officially began with a public kick-off meeting at the Hallowell City Hall on December 5, 2017 with over 40 participants. A working group of key partners organized in January 2018 and monthly meetings started in February with engaged key partners, volunteers, and interested Hallowell Recreation Area users. Monthly meetings and additional work sessions have been well attended and productive as the group works through an established work plan to meet project objectives. Martin Burnham, our NPS RTCA coach, guided us to establish a work plan, with an achievable scope, to focus our efforts.

As physical changes and trail mapping improvements are planned within the first project year at the RES, we expect the effort to improve the City's parks and recreation management processes will take more time. Our initial assessment with the City Councilor in charge of the Recreation Commission exposed a complicated and outdated ordinance. The extension of assistance will help us fully complete the review of the ordinance and recommend changes to City management in the project's final report.

#### Significant co-partners

- The City of Hallowell – provides administration, communication, public works, and meeting room support. City Manager and Council Finance Committee have confirmed, as of June 7, 2018, the FY2019 City budget proposal includes a boundary survey for the RES.
- Hallowell Conservation Commission – three members chair and participate in RTCA monthly meetings; provide history and knowledge of the RES trails and usage.

- Council Recreation Commission – current Commission Chair and other City Councilors have attended monthly meetings and are interested in success of project to raise overall awareness and priority of City parks and their recreational uses.
- Hallowell Tree Board – current Board Chair is a member of working group and is interested in the long-term forest management plan for the RES area.
- Central Maine Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (CeMe NEMBA) – Chapter has member on working group; provided maps and insights into established bike trails and biker’s trail etiquette as well as connection and feedback with their membership base.
- Manchester Snowmobile Club – current Club Chair is a member of working group; provided maps and insights into seasonal, winter uses. Key member on acknowledging private landowners (RES abutters) permission on land usage for trails.

#### Benefits of NPS assistance to Date

Significant accomplishments to date include:

- Established working group of 7 members with diverse interests committed to monthly meetings and specific working sessions
- Documented project work plan; meeting agendas and minutes posted on City website
- Review of City ordinances and interview with Recreation Commission Chair to understand park management and communication processes
- Inventory of area’s existing trail maps from different user groups
- A start on trail conditions assessment
- A start on trail sign plan
- Volunteer team engaged from a community small business for GIS software to GPS map current trail system
- City Council Finance Committee support for RES boundary survey in FY2019 budget proposal (\$15,000)
- Published online survey to collect inputs on the RES uses, improvements, user demographics, and challenges

#### Significant Resources Contributing to Current Project Effort

Key resources to date are:

- Volunteer time on the working group contributing to work plan and deliverables that include meeting agendas, meeting minutes, map reviews, physical trail walks, attending meetings, survey, public communications, and project assignments: Rosemary Presnar, Deb Sewall, Ben Godsue, Garry Hinkley, Paul Giguere, and Wes Davis; NPS staff Burnham Martin and Marie Caspard
- Volunteer time from Blue Marble Graphics (Hallowell small business) employees that are supplying GPS tools and mapping software as they walk the trail system during their lunch hours
- City Councilors’ time to attend meetings and provide feedback
- City Hall facilities including meeting rooms and projection equipment
- City Staff time to post and maintain project documents on City website

#### Significant Resources Planned for Extension

Key resources planned for next year are:

- City procured land boundary survey (estimate \$15,000)
- City procured and public donation supported trail signs and kiosk (estimate \$1,000)
- Continued volunteer time for working group, project deliverables, and on-site work

Planned public engagement or media outreach

- All City of Hallowell meetings are public and agendas are posted prior all meetings.
- The working group is currently distributing a public survey for community inputs. Outreach will include outreach emails, social media announcements, local news media, and QR codes on posted signs.
- The RTCA project posts all meeting minutes and accomplishments on the City website and on the City's and Conservation Commission's Facebook Pages. Once trail signage is in place, the working group will engage the local newspaper, the Kennebec Journal ([www.centralmaine.com](http://www.centralmaine.com))

Thank you for your consideration in regards to extending the NPS RTCA program assistance to the Hallowell Recreation Area project. The project has generated the needed energy and focus on the City's largest open space and forested park, the RES. The extension will allow us to continue working with Martin Burnham with his depth of experience. We plan to complete a full review of park and trail management processes of this important regional asset to sustain our multi-use trail network for future generations.

Sincerely,



Rosemary L Presnar  
Chair, Hallowell Conservation Commission  
Chair, NPS RTCA – Hallowell Recreation Area Planning Project

**Contact Information:**

**City and State:** Hallowell, Maine

**Congressional District(s) Number (s):** 1st

**Applicant organization(s):** Hallowell Conservation Commission (HCC)

**Primary Contact:** Rosemary Presnar **Title:** HCC Chair

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