

**December Notes -**

**Hallowell City Forest/Recreation Area - The "RES" Planning Project-RTCA meeting with Recreation Commission  
Wednesday, December 05, 2018; 5:30pm at Hallowell Fire Station**

**Attendees:**

Recreation Commission – Diano Circo, Cathie Murray, Dan Davis, Maggie Newton, Chris Buck  
RES Working Group - Rosemary Presnar, Ben Godsoe, Paul Giguere, Garry Hinkley, Deb Sewall,

**A. Action item updates**

- 1) Contact Maine Corrections Industries about signs – Rosemary emailed Scott Reiff on 11/13; need to follow up with phone call. Will move forward with trying to procure several wooden trail signs this winter; will wait on kiosk & larger kiosk style map until we finish & distribute printed version of trail map and see what kind of feedback is received
- 2) User Survey Analysis and Summary finalized – Ben completed; Rosemary will forward to City Clerk for posting on City website.
- 3) Update to draft user guide information and trail map - reviewed at Dec meeting with Rec Commission; will continue to refine map layout and verbiage to submit to Diano by March. Plan is to have published for 2019 permit season.
- 4) Rosemary will ask if City of Hallowell receives any monies from State based on snowmobile registrations. Future, potential to promote local snowmobile trails starting from Hallowell, Ground Round.
  - State snowmobile support site (info, signs & placement, trail guidelines, etc.)  
[https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/snowmobile\\_grants/club.html](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/snowmobile_grants/club.html)

**B. Agenda - Reviewed assigned Work Plan tasks with Recreation Commission**

- 1) Reviewed Observations & Recommendations draft for RES with Rec Commission based on user survey analysis and summary; latest draft v0203 attached below.
- 2) Reviewed drafts of RES trail map, user guide information - next draft will be for final input prior submitting to City for approval by 2019 permit season.
- 3) Proposed next steps on Trail Management Plan to Recreation Commission; they agreed to meet in Jan through March to complete; Diano and Rosemary will coordinate dates – Jan 16, Feb 20, Mar 20.

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## Observations and Recommendations for the Hallowell Recreation Area (v0203)

**Summary:** The RES Working Group formed in December 2017 after the Hallowell Conservation Commission submitted an RTCA application to the National Park Service; the project was selected. As of December 2018, the RES Working Group has formally met 9 times, spent hundreds of volunteer hours executing a work plan, walked miles in The RES, talked to dozens of stakeholders, surveyed over 200 RES users, generated a draft trail map and use guidelines, and raised the level of cooperation between 3 key user groups and the City. Members from the Hallowell Conservation Commission, the Central Maine Chapter of NE Mountain Bike Association, and the Manchester Country Riders (this snowmobile club that took over maintenance of the Hallowell snowmobile trails) are now meeting with the Recreation Commission to address short-term recommendations.

A summary of the RES Working Group's observations are below along with recommendations to the Recreation Commission. The recommendations are worthy of the City's acknowledgement and consideration to improve all recreational users' experiences at the City's largest and most valuable recreational space, The RES.

Recommendations noted as **short-term** are now through September 2019, when the RTCA project ends; recommendations noted as **long-term** are 2-5 years into the future.

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**TRAILS** – The user survey highlighted many needs. Signs and a trail map, a process to resolve user conflicts, and coordination between user groups and the City were prominent. The RES Working Group, including a National Park Service representative, formed to address existing trail use and maintenance. The Group will provide a trail sign plan and an on-line, printable trail map with use guidelines. HCC will fund signs for existing trails and at least one kiosk as budget allocations and coordination with local clubs allow in FY19 and FY20.

### Recommendations

- Short-term: The Working Group will team with the Recreation Commission to develop a management plan for trails, to ensure execution of the boundary survey, and to oversee appropriate boundary agreements with private landowners. – ***in process***
- Long-term: Apply for grants with City agreement for existing network enhancements or trail connectivity. Trail connectivity opportunities exist to other trail networks, City destinations, and neighboring communities.

**PARKING PERMITS and FEES** – The current fee system, for seasonal use for non-residents, is noted as unfair, confusing, and not clear on where/how to get permit. The RES Working Group's trail map and guidelines will include information on the seasonal parking fee for non-residents, note all parking areas, and where to obtain parking permits.

### Recommendations

- Short-term: The City should publish the new Trail Guide and Information pamphlet on City website. Starting with 2019 season, provide a hard copy of Trail Guide with paid permit, post consistent information on City website and signs at the RES, and enforce compliance. All cars should show a use permit, including residents. – ***planned for 2019 season***
- Long-term: Reassess the permit program goals, how fees are used, and what users are paying for. Consider changes to include percentage of fees going to trail or park budgets; volunteer hours or club memberships offsetting fees; online purchase of permits; daily use fee receptacle; or other options.

**DOGS** – The survey highlights ongoing conflicts with non-leashed dogs. In June 2018 at The RES, there was one sign at beach area that states "*Leash, Curb and Clean up after your dog. It's required by law. First offense, min. fine \$50*"

### Recommendations

- Short-term: Agree on meaning of existing sign (e.g., Dogs must be leashed at all times in all areas) and include consistent message on use guidelines pamphlet and on City website; post additional signs; enforce compliance.

- Long-term: If there is negative feedback from above enforcement, engage responsible dog owners to consider off-season options for off-leash dogs or run areas. Examples: Use ball field when not in use or during winter months, include fencing to enclose; Dogs off leash at beach area between Sept-June only; or on trails, dogs must be leashed.

**TRASH** – The survey highlights lack of containers (only one in beach area in summer) and overflowing trash at picnic shelters and beach area when container(s) full.

**Recommendations**

- Short-term: If City is going to provide trash containers, supply more and empty daily in summer. For winter use, publish carry in, carry out policy.
- Long-term: Evaluate carry in, carry out at all times.

**INFRASTRUCTURE and RESTROOM BUILDING** – Unmaintained, dilapidated, and inoperable infrastructure poses safety issues, offers poor user experiences, and mirrors negatively against the City’s image. From a leaking dam, to unavailability of potable water, to boarded and closed restrooms, the RES beach area is not a welcoming area. We can only image a future when the beach area reaches an acceptable standard for a Maine municipal park.

**Recommendations**

- Short-term: Continue summer porta-pot rentals, keep clean and determine optimal placement.
- Long-term: Assess long-term usability, including ADA use, of existing building for toilet and changing rooms; remove or replace building via grant opportunities. Provide potable water. Assess condition of dam and risk of breach. Assess remaining infrastructure (roads, culverts, utilities, lack of power, etc.) and determine next steps.

**RES FORESTRY PLAN** – For long-term health and sustainability of the City Forest it needs to be managed. Two forestry management plans are available to the City from the last 10-15 years. They are viable if overall goals are still aligned with City’s vision. Completed boundary survey would ensure that the City’s property is only land involved.

**Recommendations**

- Short-term: Assess most current plan; agree on goals and objectives.
- Long-term: After boundary survey is complete, engage a forester expert to execute forestry plan to sustain the forest environment and potentially generate funding for trails or ongoing maintenance.

**CITY PARKS** - Vaughan Field, Granite City Park, The RES, Effie L. Berry Conservation Area, and any residential or downtown pocket parks are special places and recreational assets to Hallowell residents. Our parks provide a wide variety of activities for a wide variety of users and are keystones within a livable and desirable community.

**Recommendations**

- Short Term: Consider an intern position or intern objective for 2019 to publish use guidelines and information about each City park; highlight on City website.
- Long Term: City needs to determine goals and priorities for City Parks and their maintenance/improvement budgets for restrooms, amenities, and infrastructure.

Document History

-Nov 14 version: RES Working Group submission to Recreation Commission for review on Dec 05, 2018.  
 -v0203: revisions from Dec meeting with Recreation Commission