



www.thehaw.org

### What is the Haw River Trail Partnership?

In 2006, 10 governmental agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to work together for the development of the Haw River Trail and the conservation of its land and waters.

In this spirit, the cities of Burlington and Graham have partnered with Alamance County, to fund a full-time position to coordinate conservation and trail efforts on the Upper Haw River. This newsletter, and our website: [www.thehaw.org](http://www.thehaw.org), are an effort to inform the public about the ongoing work stemming from the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding.

# THE MOUTH OF THE HAW

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HAW RIVER TRAIL PARTNERSHIP

Winter 2011-12

### DONATIONS OPEN PURYEAR PORTAGE, CONSERVE SPIRIT ISLAND

Thanks to the generosity of two river-side landowners, the Haw River Trail Partnership has secured safe passage around the Puryear Dam, and conserved a 6 acre island on the Haw River. The Puryear Dam lies approximately one mile below Swepsonville River Park on the Haw River. The Puryear Dam was built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, serving a grist mill, and later provided hydroelectric power for Virginia Mills in Swepsonville. It has long since stopped producing power, but still serves as a substantial barrier for paddlers on one of the most popular stretches of the Haw River Paddle Trail. Thanks to Mark Chilton, owner of Swepsonville Hydro, LLC, the Haw River Trail Partnership now owns a permanent public trail easement around the dam. The easement secures safe, legal portage for paddlers making the trip from Swepsonville River Park to the new Saxapahaw Lake Paddle Access, which opened on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Mark also donated a conservation easement on a portion of the property.



Newly Constructed Portage Steps  
over Puryear Dam

CONTINUED AT "PURYEAR" ON PAGE 2

### TWO NEW PADDLE ACCESSES NOW OPEN IN SAXAPAHAW

Two more pieces of the Haw River Paddle Trail fell into place in October with the opening of two new paddle access sites in Saxapahaw. Saxapahaw Mill Race Paddle Access and Saxapahaw Lake Paddle Access now provide safe, legal access to two of the most popular stretches on the Haw River.

Located above the Saxapahaw Dam at 6096 Jordan Dr. (known to Google Maps as Lakeview Drive), Saxapahaw Lake Paddle Access provides direct access to the "lake" a section of flat water stretching approximately two miles upriver. The lake is perhaps the most heavily travelled section by outfitters, but until now has been inaccessible to the general public. Special thanks to the generosity of the Jordan Family and Bill Lee for helping to make this access happen.



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For questions, comments, or to remove your name from the mailing list, email [info@thehaw.org](mailto:info@thehaw.org) or call 336/229-2229



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## Monthly Attendance at Haw River Trail Sites

September 1, 2011 through November 30, 2011

Altamahaw Paddle Access:

3,395

Shallow Ford Natural Area:

3,632

Great Bend Park:

2,780

Glencoe Paddle Access:

3,013

Town & Country Paddle Access:

964

Red Slide Park:

4,865

Graham Paddle Access:

4,698

Sweatsonville River Park-Upper:

2,953

Sweatsonville River Park-Lower:

2,268

Sax. Lake Paddle Access:

2,649

Sax. Mill Race Paddle Access:

6,455

Total Attendance Since July 1st:

59,238

## HAW RIVER TRAIL PARTNERSHIP RENEWS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, PLEDGES TO CONTINUE WORK

Five years after the local governments bordering the Haw River signed a ground-breaking Haw River Trail Memorandum of Understanding, the agreement was renewed by local governments this fall. The MOU pledges the local governments to support conservation on the Haw River and the construction of the Haw River Trail within the 500-foot planning corridor along the Haw River, this time for a longer 10-year term. The first of its kind in North Carolina when it was signed in 2006, the partnership has led to tremendous progress including the conservation of over 1,300 acres of land along the Haw and the construction of over 40 miles of land and paddle trails on the river. The counties of Alamance, Chatham, Guilford, Orange and Rockingham each renewed their commitment to the project along with the cities of Burlington, Graham and Haw River. New members Pittsboro and Greensboro also joined the Partnership for the first time this year.

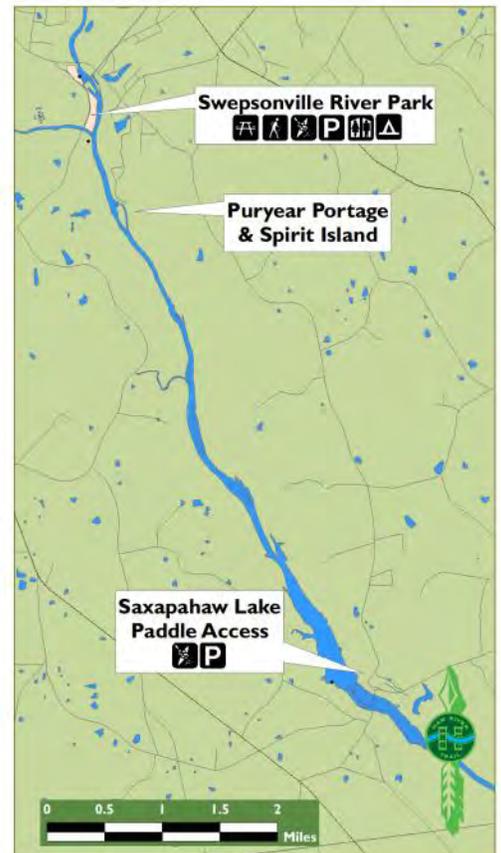
## HAW RIVER TRAIL PARTNERSHIP MEETING PLANNED

The Haw River Trail Partnership is planning a river-wide meeting of governmental partners on December 7th, 2011 in Saxapahaw. The meeting is open to the public, but be aware the meeting is a working session, not necessarily directed toward educating the public. Email [info@thehaw.org](mailto:info@thehaw.org) for more information.

## “PURYEAR” CONTINUED

Adjacent to the dam, lies an extraordinary 6 acre island, called Spirit Island by Joe Jacob, its current owner. Joe, owner of Haw River Canoe and Kayak in Saxapahaw, acquired the island in 2008 and has now donated a conservation easement on the entirety of the island. The easement will preserve the mature hardwood forest on the island while allowing Haw River Canoe and Kayak to continue to rent two camping platforms on the property to their paddling customers. The camping platforms allow paddlers to depart from Swepsonville or Saxapahaw and spend the night on a secluded island, adjacent to the waterfall created by Puryear Dam. For more information on renting the camping platforms, contact Haw River Canoe and Kayak at [www.hawrivercanoe.com](http://www.hawrivercanoe.com).

These donations are an excellent example of the public-private partnership that is helping to create and grow the Haw River Trail. Thanks to both Mark and Joe for their cooperation and generosity.





## SHALLOW FORD NATURAL AREA RECEIVES DESIGNATION AS NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAINS TO SEA TRAIL

Shallow Ford Natural Area, which opened in September 2010, has received the official designation from the State of North Carolina as part of the North Carolina Mountains to Sea Trail. While the Natural Area hosts over 5 miles of trails, approximately one mile of trail will be included in the Mountains to Sea Trail, as it makes its way from Clingsman's Dome to the Outer Banks. Shallow Ford becomes the second section of Haw River Trail to receive the MST designation, with Swepsonville river park earning the distinction in 2009.

### “SAXAPAHAW” CONTINUED

Below the dam, Saxapahaw Mill Race Paddle Access provides access to an extraordinary section of river, and helps to restore the property behind the Buddy Collins Community Center to its rightful place as a community gathering spot. Once the site of the original Saxapahaw Cotton Mill race (see page 4), the property was popular gathering spot for nearly forty years, complete with grill, benches and playground equipment. By the 1990s, the area had fallen into disrepair and has been used as a parking area for the past several years.

Renovations on the site removed the gravel and debris from the parking area, replacing the surface with topsoil and grass. The former tennis court was renovated into a new parking area for the paddle access, limiting the need to install new impervious surface. A new picnic shelter houses a twelve foot picnic table and a natural play space is taking shape, beginning with the



**Saxapahaw Mill Race Paddle Access  
before the renovations**



**Saxapahaw Mill Race Paddle Access  
after the renovations**

installation of rock “hopping stones.”

The project was made possible thanks to the generosity of the Saxapahaw Community Chest and the Saxapahaw Community. In particular, K.C. Kurtz and Matthew Ford donated countless hours of design work and the Saxapahaw Lions Club put in quite a few Saturdays constructing the unique cedar fencing on site. Material donations were also made by Scott Sand and Stone and Jordan Properties.

Funding for both paddle accesses was provided by a grant from the North Carolina Recreational Trails Program. The accesses will be operated by Alamance County Recreation and Parks Department. The accesses will be open from 8:00 a.m. until an hour before dark, every day except Christmas.

### Want More Pictures?

To see more pictures of the Yee-Haw! River Paddle, or of life on the Haw River Trail, visit the Haw River Trail Group on Flickr.com.

Upload a few of your own while you are there.



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## CLOSER LOOK

### THE HISTORY OF SAXAPAHAW MILL RACE PADDLE ACCESS

The land that is now the Saxapahaw Mill Race Paddle Access was once the site of the 1848 Saxapahaw Cotton Factory Millrace. The original Saxapahaw Cotton Factory was powered by water channeled to the mill by a millrace that passed through the current paddle access. When construction of the factory by a local Quaker, John Newlin and his two sons, began in 1844, John Newlin employed black workmen to dig the millrace and help build the factory. During the decade of the 1840s, those workers and their families were the subject of an intense legal battle to determine their status as either slaves or free.

John Newlin was opposed to slavery. Before Newlin's neighbor, Sarah Foust Freeman, passed away in 1839, she entrusted her slaves to her friend John Newlin with the understanding that he would set them free. Sarah Freeman's heirs filed multiple lawsuits against John Newlin and Sarah Foust Freeman's widower, Richard Freeman, to recover their "property". In 1849, after a decade of litigation, the North Carolina Supreme Court ruled in favor of John Newlin and Richard Freeman. One year later in September of 1850 John Newlin traveled with the forty-two former slaves and their families to Logan County, Ohio, where they were officially set free. Freedom for the Freeman slaves preceded by a decade the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861.



JOHN NEWLIN.

John Newlin died in 1867 and his sons sold the Saxapahaw Cotton Factory to Alamance County industrialist Edwin M. Holt in 1873. Richard Freeman's son, Franklin Freeman and his son, Richard A. Freeman, were both doctors in the Saxapahaw community from about 1858 until 1883. The Freeman family lived on the other side of the river in the house just south of Moore's Chapel Baptist Church and across Church Road from B. Everett Jordan Elementary School. The millrace continued to power the mill for many years. In 1938, a new dam and a modern power plant replaced waterpower with electricity.

### NEW MOUNTAINS TO SEA TRAIL LICENSE PLATES

The State of North Carolina has approved a new Mountains to Sea Trail license plate. A portion of all proceeds will be given to the Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail. For more information, or to pre-order a plate, contact Kate Dixon at 919-698-9024 or [www.ncmst.org](http://www.ncmst.org).



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Upcoming  
FMST  
Workdays

Saturday  
December 10  
Start time: 9am

Last month the Haw River Trail Chapter of the Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail began work on the new section of trail at the Challenge Golf Course in Graham. This work-day will continue that work along the half-mile stretch.

Map & Directions: <http://g.co/maps/s55nk>

For more information contact: [megansquire@gmail.com](mailto:megansquire@gmail.com)