



THE MOUTH OF THE HAW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HAW RIVER TRAIL PARTNERSHIP

Fall 2015

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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NEW PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS TO EXPAND LAND TRAIL

Twenty-seven new property acquisitions have been added to the land trail route in Southern Alamance County, between Great Alamance Creek south of Swepsonville River Park and Cane Creek on the Alamance-Orange County line. This stretch of river is over ten miles long and gaining land here requires the cooperation of several landowners. We have acquired critical pieces to continue the Haw River Trail (HRT) south from Swepsonville River Park and to create nearly four miles of contiguous HRT in the heart of Saxapahaw. The existing Saxapahaw section will extend two miles downriver and one mile upriver, following the Church Road bridge and connecting to trails on Saxapahaw Island. Funding for the project came from a multi-year grant from the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

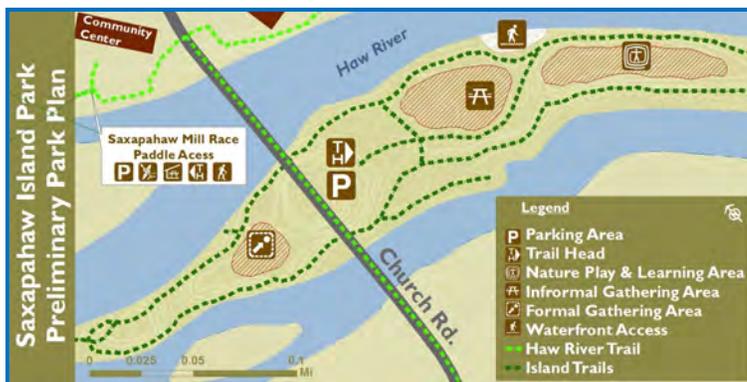


Haw River Trail – Saxapahaw Mill Race

SAXAPAHAW ISLAND PARK

We are pleased to announce preliminary plans for Saxapahaw Island Park, a nature-based park that combines elements of community and family; art and culture; and play and learning with recreation. The park will feature hiking trails, gathering spaces, waterfront access, and a nature play and learning area. To realize our vision for this innovative park, we have asked the community to get involved in its design and implementation.

Email info@thehaw.org to get involved.



Conceptual plan for Saxapahaw Island Park.



HRT land route in Southern Alamance County. Recent acquisitions shown in red.



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SPINY SHOFTSHELL TURTLE ON THE HAW



Spiny softshell turtle found basking on the rocks of the Haw River.

While paddling on the Haw River Trail, we came across an unusual turtle basking on the rocks—a spiny softshell (*Apalone spinifer*). This turtle has never before been documented from the Haw River Watershed nor from the Cape Fear River Basin (see sidebar for more about river terminology).

Jeff Humphries, Wildlife Diversity Biologist with the Wildlife Resources Commission, says this is an exciting find and he is looking forward to conducting surveys on the River to determine if this find is a lone turtle transported to the watershed or a member of a native Haw River population previously undiscovered.

Learn more about the Spiny Softshell by visiting the Amphibians & Reptiles of North Carolina page at bio.davidson.edu/herpcons.

MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA TRAIL MASTER PLAN ESTABLISHES ROUTE ALONG THE HAW RIVER TRAIL

North Carolina State Parks released a master plan and a new website for the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail (MST). The plan establishes the path of the MST to follow the Haw River Trail from Haw River State Park on the Rockingham-Guilford County line, through Alamance County to Cane Creek on the Alamance-Orange County line.



Check out the master plan and the interactive map at ncmountainstosea.org

HAW RIVER TRAIL FLORA

The riparian corridor of the Haw River supports a diversity of plants and wildlife. While hiking the Haw River Trail this summer, we noticed several interesting plants. Have you seen these plants on your hikes?

1. Carolina Spinypod (*Matelea carolinensis*)
2. Eastern Sensitive-briar (*Mimosa microphylla*)
3. Bitter-bloom (*Sabatia angularis*)
4. Passion Flower (*Passiflora incarnata*)



#hawrivertrailflora to show us your finds!

More About Rivers

What is a River Basin?

A river basin is the drainage area of a river. River basins are divided into watersheds.

The Cape Fear River Basin is the largest in North Carolina. It begins west of Greensboro, at the headwaters of the Haw River, and ends at the Atlantic Ocean in Wilmington.

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is the land that water flows across or through on its way to a common place such as a river.

The Haw River Watershed covers land in ten counties and makes up the northern portion of the Cape Fear River Basin.

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NEW TRAIL CONNECTING GLENCOE MILL VILLAGE TO THE TOWN OF HAW RIVER NEARING COMPLETION

The finishing touches are being applied to the newest section of the Haw River Trail/Mountains-to-Sea Trail. The Sellers Falls Section connects to the Glencoe Section at Stoney Creek Marina to create over seven miles of contiguous trail. The new section offers over two miles of trail meandering through mature hardwood forest with prominent views of the river.

More than 100 volunteers with the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea-Trail contributed over 2,000 hours building this trail. Efforts included not only clearing the way by removing briars and roots, but also leveling ground, putting in rock stepping stones, and constructing six bridges. Three of the bridges are 20 feet or more in length. Thank you to our faithful volunteers and to everyone who contributed!

The Sellers Falls Section is slated to open this winter.



Map of the Sellers Falls section of the Haw River Trail, which connects to the Glencoe Section at Stoney Creek Marina.



FMST volunteers designed and built a new 24-foot bridge along the route (top). They used hand tools to clear and level the trail (bottom).

ALAMANCE COUNTY TRAILS PLAN

Alamance County has adopted a county-wide trails plan that establishes the Haw River Trail as a top priority. Additional priorities include creating connecting trails to municipalities and establishing trails along creeks flowing into the Haw River. You can view the plan at alamance-nc.com/recreation.

Quarterly Attendance at Haw River Trail Sites

June-August 2015

Altamahaw Paddle Access
5,567

Shallow Ford Natural Area
7,528

Great Bend Park
4,651

Glencoe Paddle Access
1,905

Red Slide Park
6,655

Graham Paddle Access
4,528

Sweptsonville River Park-Upper
17,159

Sweptsonville River Park-Lower
12,698

Great Alamance Creek Paddle Access
4,529

Sax. Lake Paddle Access
13,106

Sax. Mill Race Paddle Access
12,967

Total Quarterly Attendance:

94,652

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PADDLE TRAIL FEATURED IN OUR STATE MAGAZINE

The Haw River Paddle Trail was featured in Our State Magazine in June. The article reviews the history of the Haw River, provides a paddle guide, and details the current value of the river to wildlife, paddlers, and the regional economy. Check it out at ourstate.com/haw-river-paddle.



The HRT Paddle Trail, looking downriver from Graham Paddle Access.

For a detailed guide to river sections of the Haw River Paddle Trail please visit our website at thehaw.org/Paddle_trail/RiverSections.html. Looking for a guided adventure or need to rent a boat to get out on the trail? Visit thehaw.org/Paddle_trail/outfitters.html for a list of local outfitters and their contact information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

TRAIL BENEFIT EVENTS

Trailathlon: Saturday, November 7th, 9:00am

| Saxapahaw | For information or to register visit thehaw.org

Haw River Hustle: Sunday, November 8th, 8:00am

| Glencoe | For information/to register visit burlingtonNC.gov/Outdoors

Your participation makes a difference. This Spring, 68 participants helped us raise over \$5,500 to help build the Haw River Trail.

THANK YOU!

AFTER WORK HIKES

Join in on a series of after-hours hikes along the Haw River Trail this Fall— for more info visit burlingtonNC.gov/Outdoors.

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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For questions, comments, or to add/remove your name to/from the HRT mailing list, email info@thehaw.org.