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Hockanum River Web site features details on trails and activities

BY BARBARA ARMENTANO ReminderNews

The official Web site for the Hockanum River Watershed Association – www.hockanumriverwa.org – takes the reader to places in Manchester that are hidden from city life and offers complete details on how to enjoy river activities, trail walks and colorful views of every season.



The site contains a page showing the location of the trails in the town, allowing the user to select a trail by either clicking a button or putting the cursor on a trail on the map and clicking. Doug Smith heads a group of volunteers who meet three times a week to keep the river and woodlands clean and promote activities such as kayaking, canoeing, jogging, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, bird-watching and photography, along the river and its tributaries.

The Hockanum River Watershed Association site contains information to make experiences easy and safe. It was created by Jim Hall, who joined the Manchester Hockanum River Linear Park Committee in May 2007, shortly after he retired. While enjoying a trail walk with his father-in-law, Harold Scheid, a long-standing member of the HRLPC, they met Smith, who said he had been trying, without success, to get a Web site for the HRWA for quite some time. When he learned that Hall had worked in data processing for nearly 38 years, Smith asked if Hall could help develop a Web site. Hall said he never had the opportunity to work on Web sites but would be willing to take it on, as long as he wouldn't be held to completion dates.

What started out as a learning experience became a continuous effort between Hall, Smith and several other members until the initial version was put onto the Web near Christmas of that year. Once the base was built, supplemental sites were identified on an ongoing basis. The intent was to provide information for readers to get an idea of what the trail is like, where in the town it is, where to park and what to expect.

By making it consistent for each trail, a user-friendly site resulted. Maps describe the name and length of each trail. Roadside "Hockanum River Hiking Trail" green and white signs are at all trail entrances, and hikers can stay on the trail by following the orange blazes on the trees along the way. Check the Web site, and look over safety regulations before traveling around.

Individual links go directly from the Home Page to various topics. A reader can find information on invasive plants, noxious plants, seasonal flowers, individual towns, watershed history, natural features and even a weather report. There are four slide shows showing kayaking on the river, fall foliage, trail walks and trails maintenance. Each slide show is entertaining, as well as informative. Motorized vehicles or bicycles are not allowed on any of the trails.

In addition to the information available on the Web, trail pamphlets and maps are available at the Customer Service and Information Center office at the Manchester Town Hall, 41 Center St.