

I.

Benson Park Master Plan

March 3, 2019



Benson Park Master Plan

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II. Introduction

The Original Master Plan for the property that would eventually become known as Benson Park was titled “Benson’s Property Master Plan” and was developed for the original Benson’s Committee. In 2002, the Plan was submitted to the Hudson Board of Selectmen and the Hudson Planning Board for approval and inclusion in the Town’s Master Plan.

That original plan proposed a blend of active and passive recreational activities, walking trails, preservation of various natural areas, and restoration of several historic structures that remain on the property. Due to terms included in the 2009 deed that transferred ownership from the State of New Hampshire to the Town of Hudson, some limitations were placed on active recreation within the Park boundaries. In addition, a number of projects (such as the 9/11 Memorial) have been proposed and developed since the Park reopening in 2010.

This document is an updated master plan for Benson Park that reflects the changes to the property and development of resources in the Park since the Town of Hudson acquired ownership of the property in 2009. At this time 90% of the development of the park is completed. The remaining work to be done largely involves the historic structures. Other projects have not been started or only partially completed due to restrictions in the deed or changes in the overall plans for the Park that have evolved over time. Additional projects have been completed that were not part of the Original Master Plan. The focus of the Master plan is directed to the challenges of maintaining the park in its current configuration and the preservation of the buildings. Due to the high cost of maintenance, in future years, promotion of the park should be carefully thought out to encourage local usage instead of large regional crowds. This park’s tax burden to Hudson residents should be considered at all times. Section III below provides some details on the development in the Park as of the date of this document.

III. Overview of Existing Conditions

The Original Master Plan defined three general areas in the Park, “Active, Historic”, “Passive Area (recreation area)”, and “Native Area”. Within each area, a list of projects was proposed. Over the 15 years since the Original Master Plan was approved, some projects in each area have been completed, others only partially completed, and still others have not been acted upon. Some of this latter group will not be carried forward due to practicality or the property deed of 2009 that transferred the land to the Town of Hudson. In addition, several projects that were not included in the Original Master Plan have been completed. These are identified in the lists below.

A. Original Master Plan - Active, Historic Area

1. Museum – train station

The exterior of the Station building has been restored. The next step would be to rehabilitate the interior of the station near to its 1916 documented condition, and use the interior as a museum of railroad history (Boston & Maine Railroad and its predecessors) in Hudson, including its tie to the Benson’s Animal Farm.



2. Educational Center – learn about Hudson and Benson’s

The Friends of Benson Park are working towards this goal with their lease of the former Elephant Barn from the Town and the continuing rehabilitation of the Elephant Barn into a “Benson Wild Animal Farm” museum and store.



3. Visitors’ Center

The Original Master Plan included a proposal to relocate the old Train Station Building near the intersection of Central St. and Kimball Hill Rd. This has not been implemented and the Train Station Building is now located on a permanent foundation in the Historic Area of the Park. The Elephant Barn store will serve as the visitors’ center.

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4. Stonework rehabbed, uncovered, keep consistent walkways, return to former features wherever possible

Much has been done, but there is still more to accomplish. Four examples of work remaining include stonework near playground which was disturbed when the water line was installed, the stone bridge at the entrance to Swan Pond, the alligator pond and the stonework at the high end of Serenity Garden.

5. Parking

There are approximately 171 paved parking spaces. This does not include the additional Handicapped and Volunteer Permit parking spaces near the upper gate at the Old Office. Due to area below the parking lot being controlled by the D.O.T for future wetlands mitigation as noted in the portion of the deed titled "Exhibit D State Conservation Easement", expansion of the parking lot is not possible.

6. Preservation of unique landscape features

The replacement of Norway spruces along Swan Lake must continue. The Overlook foundations should be maintained. To preserve the water features in the park, water control structures, including the dams at Nakuru Lake, duck pond, Moose Pond, Swan Lake, the waterway at the Shoe and aeration of Swan Lake, should be maintained, repaired, or replaced.

7. Reconstruct the burned red barn

This item has functionally been completed. The land on which this structure was located was "swapped" with NHDOT for another parcel, on which the new Senior Center, resembling a red barn, was constructed. The Senior Center provides a wide range of activities for the senior citizens of the Town. The Senior Center includes the HCTV facilities on the lower level of the building. The HCTV conference room is available for community use.



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8. Restrooms

A proposal for a restroom facility to replace the existing portable toilets in the Park was proposed as a Warrant article at the March 2018 Town elections. A contract has been awarded and the restrooms will be completed by July 1, 2019.

9. Water and sewer distribution

Water and sewer service to the Elephant Barn was completed in 2017 as part of the Utilities project to bring water and sewer service into the Park in 2018. The extension of water and sewer service to the Gorilla House is complete. Train station has studs for future connection in place.

10. Benches and Site Furniture

Approximately 60 benches and 25 picnic tables have been installed throughout the Park, including both the Historic Area and the Passive Recreation Area. The standardized benches have been installed with private donations under the auspices of The Friends of Benson Park, who owns them. The FoBP plans to transfer ownership of these benches to the Town sometime in the future. The picnic tables include both old and new construction, some of which will need to be repaired or replaced every few years.



11. Lighting

To date, some security lighting has been provided in the historic area and at the Haselton Barn. Specific purposes for the lighting such as security lighting or area lighting would need to be identified. Additional light is not needed due to daytime only use of the park.

12. Electric Service

An upgraded electric service has been installed for the Elephant Barn. New electrical service to the Office Building, the Gorilla House and the newly constructed Amphitheater are completed. Service to the train station is currently in the planning stages.

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13. Old Woman's Shoe
Projects to restore the Shoe have been completed by local Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts. The latest renovation was done by volunteers in 2018. The shoe will require regular maintenance.



14. Ticket Booth Kiosk
An Eagle Scout project restored the kiosk and installed it on a permanent foundation in a prominent location between the Office Building and the Elephant Barn.



B. Original Master Plan - Passive Area (recreation area)

1. Picnic pavilion
The old A-Frame building is being used as a picnic pavilion with several picnic tables in that location. The roof of this structure was replaced with a more permanent steel material in 2017. In addition, there are picnic tables located at the Overlooks, in the North field and several other areas throughout the Park.



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2. Concert area / amphitheater

The construction of the Mallory Gray Amphitheater adjacent to Swan Lake has been completed.



3. Garden areas

These areas are located throughout the park as part of the Adopt A Spot program which is ongoing including the butterfly garden which is maintained by the GFWC Hudson Club.



4. Playground

The playground has been completed and is located adjacent to the Gorilla Cage building and the 9/11 Memorial. The funds for the playground equipment came from the Recreational Impact Fees collected by the Town for new development. Installation was completed by volunteers from the Town and the playground equipment manufacturer. Additional playgrounds should be avoided due to high maintenance costs.



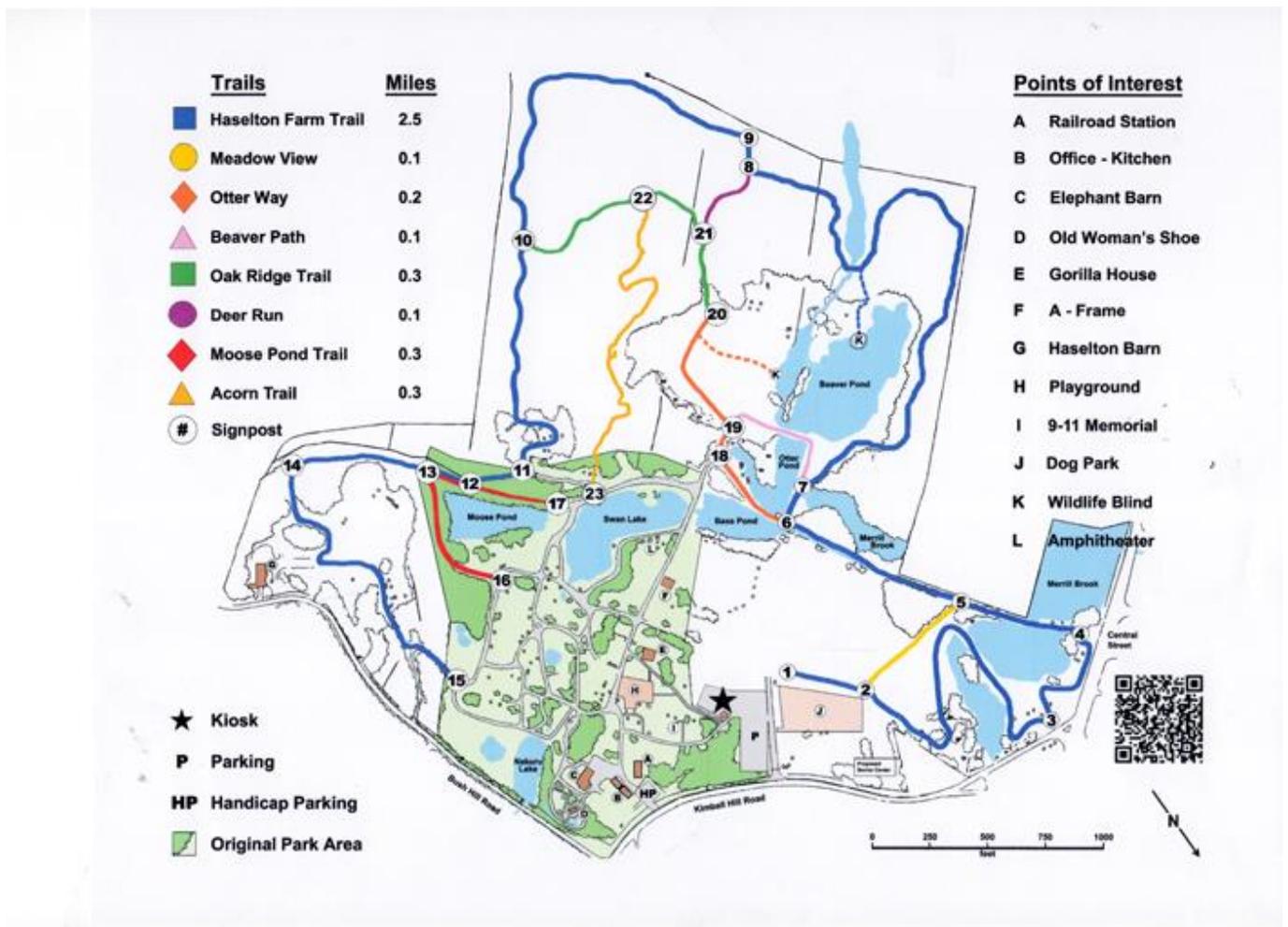
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C. Original Master Plan - Native Area

1. Trails – walking, hiking, cross country skiing, biking, snowshoeing.

An extensive network of hiking and walking trails has been developed throughout the Park. See the map below. The up to date trails map can be found on the Hudson Town web site on the Benson Park Resources page at the following link:

<http://www.hudsonnh.gov/docs/ben/ben-trail-map.pdf>



2. Educational / interpretive signage

Some signs have been installed, more could be provided and their design should be standardized.

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3. Wildlife habitat diversity

Wildlife habitat has been maintained in the wetlands conservation easement areas and the uplands areas reachable via the trail system.

4. Birdwatching / wildlife observations blinds

Two observation blinds have been constructed as Eagle Scout projects. There may be space to construct one more at a spot 100 yards east of post 3 on the Haselton Farm Trail.

5. Nature walks

The Haselton Farm Trail and the network of other trails in the Native Area support this activity.

6. Emergency vehicle access

This is being planned as an Eagle scout project jointly with the Hudson Fire Department.

D. Projects not included in Original Master Plan

1. 9-11 Memorial

The 9-11 Memorial recognizes the events surrounding the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 upon the United States was constructed adjacent to the paved trail from the main gate up to the Elephant Barn and other structures in the Active Historic Area. The memorial was planned



and constructed with the help of Town staff and volunteers. This Memorial was dedicated on September 11, 2011, the tenth anniversary of the attacks.

2. Dog Park

The Benson Park Dog Park was constructed adjacent to the entrance road into Benson Park near the Senior Center. The Dog Park was opened in 2012 and is maintained by volunteers and overseen by the Benson Park Committee.

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3. Little Free Library

The Little Free Library is a small enclosed kiosk containing free lending books that was installed along the main paved trail leading from the Office-Kitchen to Swan Lake. This is maintained by volunteers.



4. Eagle Scout projects

Several Eagle Scout projects have been completed over the years, including wooden footbridges near the Old Woman's Shoe, wildlife blinds near the wetlands, and the brick walkway and landscaping in front of the Gorilla House.



5. Covered Bridge

Planning is in progress to replace the old worn out bridge at the old alligator pond with a covered bridge. A covered bridge is preferred because, not only will the look of the covered bridge go with the Park, but it will also hold up to the weather much better than an open bridge and there will be much less maintenance required. To help fund the cost of the bridge a brick walk way fund raiser has been proposed. The walk way would go from the bottom of the stairs between the overlooks to the new covered bridge.



6. Fishing

This is an on-going activity with people fishing in Swan Lake throughout the warmer months. In addition, the Last Cast Fishing Derby group holds an annual event to

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encourage fishing by children throughout the area. The group stocks Swan Lake with fish each year.

7. Dog waste disposal supplies and locations

There are many dog walkers in Benson Park and places to dispose of dog waste are very limited. Although the stations are a maintenance issue and require restocking, they encourage proper disposal. Dog waste supply stations have been installed in several spots in the park.

8. Installation of interpretive signs

Install interpretive signs describing the Nashua and Lawrence Electric Railway whose right of way crossed through the lands of Benson's Wild Animal Farm, between Central Street and Bush Hill Road. (The right of way followed points 4, 5, 6, 23, 17, 12, 13, and 14 on the current map of Benson Park.)

9. Trash

Trash barrels are placed in the park and are serviced by the town provider except during the winter months. A dumpster is also located in the parking lot.

IV. Proposed Projects, Costs and Enhancements

A. Permanent Restroom Facility

A project proposal was created for construction of a permanent restroom facility for the Park. A Warrant article passed on the 2018 Town ballot for the March 2018 elections. The facility will be constructed in 2019.

Construction cost estimates:

Scope of Work	Estimate
Demolition	\$ 6,250.00
Concrete	\$ 1,900.00
Masonry	\$ 2,900.00
Steel / Misc Metals	\$ 3,500.00
Roofing	\$ 2,100.00
Carpentry / Millwork	\$ 8,945.00
Doors / Frames / Glazing / Hardware	\$ 3,180.00
Windows	\$ 1,800.00
Acoustical Ceiling	\$ -
Flooring	\$ 4,600.00
Painting	
Specialties	\$ 6,800.00
Plumbing	\$ 32,400.00
Fire Protection	\$ -
HVAC	\$ 900.00
Electrical	\$ 8,000.00
General Conditions	\$ 7,500.00
Sub-Total	\$ 90,775.00
Contractor OH + Fee	\$ 8,000.00
 Utilities to within 5 feet of building	
Sewer	
Extend sewer service from sewer access cover to building - 130 ft x \$100/ft	
Sewer Sub-Total	\$ 13,000.00
Water	

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Extend water service to building - 130 ft x \$125/ft	
Water meter installation	
Water Sub-Total	\$ 17,050.00
Electric	
Install underground primary from existing pole to Transformer near Train Depot and then to new Transformer near Gorilla House	
Excavation and installation of conduit for above	
Electric Sub-Total	\$ 72,750.00
Utilities Sub-Total	\$ 102,800.00
Contingency (10% of above subtotals)	\$ 19,357.50
Total	\$ 220,932.50

Annual operating cost estimates:

Description	Units	Cost per unit	Subtotal	Total
Monthly janitorial supplies (toilet paper, cleaning materials, etc.)	8	\$ 100.00		\$ 800
Water (8 months service, 1.5" meter)				
Monthly meter charge	12	\$ 65.49	\$ 786	
Water usage (8 months * 100 cu.ft./month)	800	\$ 3.30	\$ 2,640	
Install/Remove Seasonal Meter	2	\$ 92.00	\$ 184	
Total Water				\$ 3,610
Sewer (sewer rate for 1.5" water meter)				
Quarterly meter charge	4	\$ 73.82	\$ 295	
Quarterly usage charge (300 cu.ft./quarter)	900	\$ 1.19	\$ 1,071	
Total Sewer				\$ 1,367
Electricity				
Summer (8 months - Apr through Nov)	8	\$ 50.00	\$ 400	
Winter (4 months - Dec through Mar)	4	\$ 20.00	\$ 80	
Total Electricity				\$ 480
Part time weekday labor				\$ 6,594
Part time weekend labor (overtime)				\$ 3,956
Total				\$ 16,806

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B. Office Building Restoration

Restoration of the Office/Kitchen building was originally estimated in the Historic Structures report for the building. Some of the tasks have been completed over several years. Most recently, the front foundation sill and support beams were replaced in 2017. The estimated costs for the individual components have been updated in 2016 but are still just estimates that will need to be confirmed when the time comes for the individual projects to be completed.

Eventual use of the building will be office space for the Park maintenance staff and use for volunteer activities coordinated by the Benson Park Committee.

Scope of Work	Estimate
Office and Kitchen windows replacement	\$ 24,000.00
Paint exterior siding	\$ 6,700.00
Paint exterior architectural trim	\$ 1,750.00
Fabricate and install chimney cap	\$ 450.00
Caulk between chimney and D-log siding	\$ 300.00
Repointing of existing stone foundation	\$ 3,800.00
Frame and install 2 cellar doors	\$ 1,500.00
Rehabilitate north elevation door	\$ 850.00
Refinish original floors	\$ 2,100.00
Interior wall paneling	\$ 2,300.00
Install new heating system	\$ 7,200.00
New electrical service, distribution, wiring	\$ 8,500.00
Install alarm system	\$ 2,600.00
Install hot water system	\$ 2,200.00
ADA bathroom	\$ 7,500.00
Construct door and frame for Kitchen east elevation	\$ 800.00
Kitchen tile roof	\$ 22,000.00
Kitchen - New electrical service, distribution, wiring	\$ 6,500.00
Kitchen - heat system	\$ 7,300.00
Kitchen - alarm system	\$ 1,400.00
Total	\$ 109,750.00

C. Train Station Interior Restoration

The Train Station has been located on a permanent foundation and the exterior has been repaired to make the building weather tight. Eventual use of the building is anticipated to be for display of railroad museum artifacts that show the history of the B&M railroad in the Hudson

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area. A plan for the restoration of the interior of the building needs to be completed. Costs are at 2003 rates.

Scope of Work	Estimate
Selective interior demolition	\$ 5,100.00
Install water line	\$ 3,000.00
Install water connection	\$ 700.00
Install sewer line	\$ 3,350.00
Install sewer connection	\$ 2,000.00
Install electric meter and connection	\$ 4,300.00
Hot water heater	\$ 1,000.00
Heating system	\$ 5,700.00
New electrical service, distribution, wiring	\$ 9,000.00
Install alarm system	\$ 3,700.00
Repair cornice and gutter	\$ 10,000.00
Repair historic doors	\$ 4,000.00
Repair historic windows	\$ 8,000.00
Repair/replace wood floors	\$ 3,000.00
Repair/replace plaster walls & ceilings	\$ 14,000.00
Total	\$ 76,850.00

D. [Haselton Barn Restoration](#)

The current state of the structure was evaluated in September 2018. An updated estimated with the costs of restoration and the proposed use of the building needs to be determined.

Scope of Work	Estimate
2018 estimate for total restoration of barn	\$ 775,000.00
Intermediate Repairs	
Repair south side sagging sill and beams	\$ 8500.00
Re-roof	\$ 60000.00
Regrade south side foundation	\$ 1500.00
Vandalism reduction	\$ 5400.00
Clean out debris	\$ 800.00

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E. Covered Bridge

A covered bridge has been proposed to replace the aged wooden bridge a Nakuru Lake dam. The old bridge needs to be removed. New footings will be needed to support a more permanent covered bridge.

F. Water Features on Storybook Hill

The waterway on Storybook Hill needs extensive masonry repair as well as a pump, piping and a well near Nakuru Lake to supply water.

V. Project Calendar

Project	Year				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Permanent Restroom Facility		X			
Office/Kitchen Building Restoration					
Siding painting	X				
North façade siding restoration	done				
Windows replacement		X			
Office exterior doors			X		
Building utilities	electric		X		
Kitchen clay tile roof		X			
Kitchen exterior door and wall			X		
Office ADA bathroom					X
Interior finishing					X
Train Station Interior Restoration					
Assess restoration needs and cost estimates		X			
Develop plan for restoration		X			
Haselton Barn Restoration					
Assess restoration needs and cost estimates		X			
Develop proposed use plan			X		
Covered Bridge					
Finalize construction plans	X				
Develop fund raising plan		X			
Construction			X		
Replace Picnic Tables	done		X		