



The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire
22 Bridge Street, 4th Floor
Concord, New Hampshire 03301-4987

tel [603] 224.5853
fax [603] 228.2459
nature.org/newhampshire

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 26, 2021
10:30 AM EST

Press Contact: Jim O'Brien
Phone: 603.856.5378
Email: Jim_Obrien@tnc.org

**All Persons Trail in Manchester is Breaking Down Barriers
to the Outdoors**

MANCHESTER, NH - Construction kicked-off today on The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire's new universally accessible trail—an effort that promises to bring more people closer to nature in the City of Manchester.

It's no secret that outdoor recreation is part of what makes the Granite State great. But the reality is that our outdoor spaces are not accessible or welcoming to all. The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire is working to change this reality through the construction of its All Persons Trail at the Manchester Cedar Swamp Preserve, the city's largest conserved area.

Today, on the 31st anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, The Nature Conservancy was joined by supportive community leaders, Manchester citizens, project funders and elected officials to mark the official ground breaking of the All Persons Trail, which is anticipated to be completed and open to the public this October.

Mark Zankel, State Director of The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire is thrilled about the project: "At The Nature Conservancy we believe equity and diversity are vital to a future where people and nature thrive together. Breaking ground on the Cedar Swamp All Persons Trail is part of our commitment to ensuring that New Hampshire's conservation lands are welcoming and accessible for all who seek connection with our natural world, with each other and with themselves."

When finished, the trail will wind through the preserve's unique and diverse habitats, showcasing mystical green wetlands, showy giant rhododendrons and funky rock formations formed during retreating Ice Age. The trail's design includes a flat, even surface for easy walking and unrestricted movement of assistance-providing devices like wheelchairs and strollers. Periodic benches will dot its length for frequent rest stops. Visitors will also be treated to informative panels that highlight the sights, sounds and smells of the preserve, as well as an app-based audio tour that will be offered in both English and Spanish. A new stop on the City's bus route will provide much-needed transportation to and from the preserve, located in the Hackett Hill area of Manchester.

Manchester resident Kim Thibeault, a nature lover who also happens to have vision impairment, is looking forward to the having a safe and accessible place nearby where she can visit with her family and friends. "Knowing that this trail will be close by and accessible is going to improve my quality life in Manchester tremendously. Not only is this location accessible but knowing that it was built through partnerships with individuals within the disability community makes me feel like it really is a place for me."

Among the community groups present at the breaking ground event were the Disability Rights Center – New Hampshire and the NAACP of Greater Manchester. Both groups are only two of many who The Nature Conservancy has consulted with about the construction of the new trail.

"As we celebrate the ADA and its transformative impact upon the daily lives of people with disabilities, it is also a time to reflect upon how we can build upon this landmark civil rights law and its vision of inclusion and equality. Architectural barriers too often prohibit people with disabilities from accessing their community but the All Persons Trail

demonstrates what is possible when inclusion and equality are at the heart of design.” said, **Stephanie Patrick the Executive Director, Disability Rights Center – New Hampshire.**

James McKim, President of the NAACP of Greater Manchester also extended his support for the project stating, "Everyone should be able to explore nature. That is how our bodies destress, recharge, and rejuvenate. We are excited to support the work of the Nature Conservancy in the creation of the All Persons Trail at Manchester Cedar Swamp with its wonderful set of trails so close to the place where we live. May it be a space where we all can come together and enjoy life."

Elected officials, including Senator Maggie Hassan, Manchester Mayor Joyce Craig and Ward 12 Alderman Keith Hirschman, voiced their support for the project and pointed out the benefits to all New Hampshire residents who face barriers to accessing nature.

“Even though we have made important progress in the 31 years since the passage of the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, there is still more work to do to strengthen inclusion in New Hampshire and across the country. Building a universally accessible trail at the Manchester Cedar Swamp Preserve will help ensure that people of all abilities can access and explore the beauty of our state,” said **U.S. Senator Maggie Hassan**. “I am grateful to The Nature Conservancy and their partners for their efforts in making this project a reality.”

“Equitable access to outdoor spaces in Manchester is a priority - and this thoughtful project at the Manchester Cedar Swamp Preserve is meeting the needs of our community. The construction of the All Persons Trail by The Nature Conservancy, in conjunction with the expanded bus service to the trailhead by the Manchester Transit Authority, enables more residents to experience and enjoy this somewhat hidden treasure - a beautiful urban preserve, the largest conservation area in the city, located on the west side.” said, **Manchester Mayor Joyce Craig**.

“As the Alderman for Ward 12, where the Cedar Swamp Preserve is located, I am not only supportive of The Nature Conservancy’s proposed All Persons Trail I am also very much looking forward to its completion both for my constituents and for myself and my family. This trail will be a huge asset to our ward and our city” said, **Alderman Keith Hirschmann**, who could not be in attendance due to a conflict but is a vocal supporter of the project.

One of the project’s early funders – VF Foundation – was also in attendance at the celebration. **said Gloria Schoch, Executive Director of The VF Foundation said**, “The VF Foundation is proud to partner with The Nature Conservancy to ensure that everyone, regardless of abilities or background, can enjoy The Manchester Cedar Swamp Preserve’s unique ecosystem. We hope the inclusive design of the All Persons Trail, will inspire more community-centered projects across the country that are welcoming to all, while fostering active lifestyles and deepening our connection with nature.”

Updates on and announcements about the project—including information around temporary preserve closures and openings—are available at www.nature.org/manchester, as well as on The Nature Conservancy’s [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

###

Thanks to the many supporters of the All Persons Trail including: AARP, Anna B. Stearns Charitable Foundation, Appalachian Mountain Club, Disability Rights Center - New Hampshire, Madelaine G. von Weber Trust, NAACP of Greater Manchester, NH Parks and Recreation’s Recreational Trails Program, Norwin S. & Elizabeth N. Bean Foundation, Opportunity Networks, RiverWoods Manchester, Samuel P. Hunt Foundation, The VF Foundation, Southern New Hampshire University, and the Manchester community members who provided valuable input.

The Nature Conservancy is a global conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. We are tackling climate change, conserving lands, waters and oceans at an unprecedented scale, providing food and water sustainably and helping make cities more sustainable. Working in 79 countries and territories, we use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners. To learn more about our work in New

Hampshire, visit www.nature.org/newhampshire or follow [@Nature_NH](https://twitter.com/Nature_NH) on Twitter, [@tncnewhampshire](https://www.instagram.com/tncnewhampshire) on Instagram, or [@TNCNH](https://www.facebook.com/TNCNH) on Facebook.