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We are developing an interactive trail map using Track Kit & Google Maps to mark points of interest along the trail loop with stories and pictures that the public can access using their cell phones. This interactive map will highlight the following:

### Issue
- Rich in biodiversity, centrally located in CT, and an important connective part of the Hockanum River Linear Park, the Laurel Marsh Trail has potential to be a much more valuable resource to local and regional communities.
- Relatively unknown to the public, the park has had problems with vandalism, illegal dumping and significant alien plant invasions including Japanese knotweed, Multi-flora rose, Buckthorn, Phragmites etc.
- High voltage powerlines, the odoriferous town landfill and waste water treatment plants impact the public’s perceptions.

### Project Goals
By conducting multiple species surveys over the seasons and showcasing the park’s biodiversity, we hope to make it more attractive to hikers, birders, families and school groups. Our goals are:
1. Develop a working list of floral and faunal species to document the biodiversity present.
2. Create trail guides (printed and online) that hikers can use to identify species encountered.
3. Produce an internet-based interactive trial map of the Laurel Marsh Trail that the public can access with their cell phones while hiking.

### Floral & Faunal Surveys
- Conducted seven walking surveys taking pictures & recording species
- Between 9/30/18 – 3/2/19
- Fall asters and goldenrods well represented
- Major fungi year due to high rainfall
- We will continue survey visits to compile spring and summer species

### Trail Guides
- Warren used Track Kit smartphone GPS App to take waypoints
- Focused on diversity in the various ecosystems
- Photos by D. Cappaert
- Visitors will see laminated trail posters inside trailhead kiosk with updated species lists
- When completed the interactive trail map will be posted at Google Maps

### Internet-based Interactive Trail Map
We are developing an interactive trail map using Track Kit & Google Maps to mark points of interest along the trail loop with stories and pictures that the public can access using their cell phones. This interactive map will highlight the following:

- Common plants & animals IDs: special focus on trees (using bark), shrubs, ferns, & insects
- Invasive species IDs
- Hockanum River ecology & history
- Children sensory tour of plants and natural objects they can touch, smell, taste & hear
- Water quality testing opportunities
- Winter animal tracks

### Next Steps
Dedicated volunteers are working to remove alien invasive species and restore native plant communities but there is a need for additional resources to be provided by Manchester and the State of Connecticut to repair and enhance entry way signage & seating as well as the extensive boardwalk system that allows access to the extensive flood plain ecosystem. We will work further with all stakeholders to help make this park a more valued and utilized recreational and educational resource.