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# CITY OF BIDDEFORD, MAINE

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## **Heart of Biddeford Awarded \$52,500 Grant from Elmina B. Sewall Foundation for Clifford Park Improvements**

**BIDDEFORD, ME (June 8, 2018)** –Heart of Biddeford is pleased to announce that it has received a \$52,500 grant from the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation’s Healthy People, Healthy Places program. Heart of Biddeford will administer the grant on behalf of projects that will make Clifford Park safer, easier to navigate, and more accessible to its diverse users. Friends of Clifford Park, Biddeford’s Public Works and Recreation Departments, and Heart of Biddeford will each implement different aspects of the grant.

The Sewall Foundation’s generous support will fund the purchase of a utility terrain vehicle to transport branches and rubbish off Clifford Park’s trails. These vehicles will be operated by trained Park Stewards who will be hired to conduct cleanup and maintenance of the park’s 140 acres, provide more human visibility on the trail system, and patrol areas where illegal fires are sometimes spotted.

Funds will also be used to bring the Maine Conservation Corps to the park to re-blaze the Black Trail and add raised bridges over wet portions of the Red and Orange Trails. These efforts, combined with improved signage and wayfinding efforts also supported by the grant, will increase trail safety and accessibility. The Sewall Foundation’s funding will also be used to provide honorarium to a wide range of event presenters, building upon the programming that has been developing in the park for the last year.

“Clifford Park is a jewel that belongs to the city of Biddeford and its surrounding communities, and it was really a diamond in the rough until Dana Peck, Catherine Glynn, and Katie Labbe came together under Heart of Biddeford’s guidance to set up Friends of Clifford Park,” explained Friends of Clifford Park’s Marty Schindler. “Since then, the park has slowly emerged from an era of neglect and is coming into its own. This funding from the Sewall Foundation will be another great step forward for the benefit of the park and all its users.”

Ward 2 Councilor John McCurry and Mayor Alan Casavant both echoed Schindler’s enthusiasm for this grant opportunity.

“The Sewall Foundation recognized that Clifford Park is a valuable resource not only for Ward 2 residents, but the entire city,” McCurry said. “The work done by Friends of Clifford Park has already gone a long way in making the park a treasured part of our community, and this grant will allow us to continue to build on that progress.”

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“The projects funded by the Sewall Foundation will help the City with its efforts to make green space more accessible to all of our residents,” added Casavant. “We are grateful to have such generous support for these improvements.”

The Elmina B. Sewall Foundation supports work in Maine to improve the well-being of people, animals and the environment while fostering relationships that strive for social equity and community resilience. The Healthy People, Healthy Places grant awarded to Heart of Biddeford is awarded to communities for projects that integrate the well-being of both people and their environments.

“The proximity of such a large and beautiful park to so many households makes it a real treasure,” said Megan Shore, the foundation’s Senior Program Director. “The Sewall Foundation is pleased to support this community-driven effort to improve and make Clifford Park more accessible, expanding opportunities for relaxation, rejuvenation, and recreation.”

For more information about the Elmina B. Sewall foundation, please visit <https://www.sewallfoundation.org/>. To connect with Friends of Clifford Park and follow along with the progress of this project, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/friendsofcliffordpark/>.

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