



Essex County **News** Trail Association

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Summer/Fall 2004

From the President

Don Curiale

If you listen closely to the soft sounds of the rustling leaves along the trail, you might hear the sounds of change. The Essex County Trail Association continues to grow, adapt, and meet new challenges.

There has been internal pressure for ECTA and its Board of Directors for the past year or so. Membership presently reaches 700 or more yearly, but this will soon change. With the addition of West Newbury to our organization, we can expect more mailings, materials, and trail maintenance projects. We can expect more demand on our loyal

volunteers to keep up with these changes and demands as we continue to fulfill our mission of preservation and maintenance of open space and trails for passive recreation in our local communities.

But eventually something has to give. It could be volunteer burnout, overworked membership secretaries, treasurers, or frustrated directors. This is a fear no organization needs or wants to entertain. But quick growth and demands are a healthy challenge and a challenge ECTA will meet.

At its last meeting, the Board of Directors of the ECTA voted to

investigate and establish a salaried, part-time position for a Coordinator. The Coordinator will work an eight-hour week and perform various tasks from direct mailing, answering phone calls, and monitoring trails, to assisting volunteer officers, and attending official town and/or public meetings. The job is flexible and developing.

The ECTA Board wants you, our loyal members, to be proud of your Association that takes its job seriously. We want to be an organization that responds to your needs efficiently and in a timely fashion. An organization that can adapt to meet the demand of change for better trail maintenance. Thank you.

Trail Maintenance Update

Bradley Palmer State Park

Due to circumstances beyond ECTA's control, the cleanup in Bradley Palmer State Park has just been completed. Debris was removed, fallen branches and trees were cut up, and overgrowth pulled back. We realize there are erosion problems on many trails. We are trying to tackle those in the near future. ECTA would like to thank Dan Streeter and his bike volunteers for all

their hard work in the park in June.

New England BioLab Trails

BioLab trails have been pruned and groomed. Again, we ask dog walkers to please leash their dogs on private property, especially on the new Barowy Trail. Thank you.

Pingree Reservation

All trails on the Pingree Reservation in Hamilton have been cleared and pruned for overgrowth, including the private trail that leads to the Myopia Schooling Field and near the railroad tracks.

Moulton Street

The Moulton Street trail that runs parallel to the street near the ski hill has been cleared of overgrowth.

The owners of the gray one-story contemporary on Moulton Street no longer want riders to use the edge of their property as a cut through between the Sears' property and Moulton Street. You will have to use the road.

Marini Easement

The Marini Easement on Linebrook Road has been posted for usage.

The Essex County Trail Association is dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of open trails in our local communities for the purpose of passive recreation and the benefit of the environment. The ECTA works to build coalitions with national and local associations, to serve as liaison between membership and landowners, and to encourage responsible trail use.

Visit www.ectaonline.org.

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Going Off the Beaten Path to Discover Our Nature

By Alan Lupo

Reprinted from the *Boston Globe*, July 8, 2004, Globe North section

The urban columnist makes no excuses. When it comes to suburban, exurban, and rural phenomena, he is a slow-moving work in progress.

Consider. There he was in downtown Ipswich. He walked up and down the street. It was not noisy. He did not see road rage. He did not hear sirens or airplane engines. Nobody sidled up to him with a tale of woe to hit him up for a quarter. Not once did anybody who even looked like a political player approach and whisper into his ear some plot so Byzantine that it would have confounded Machiavelli and the best of the Borgias.

He was, in a word, or rather, four words, out of his element. Rather than flee from this self-imposed aberration of his normal lifestyle, he knew he must plunge even deeper into the abyss of the region's outback. He drove to Bradley Palmer State Park in Topsfield. It is a swath of 721 acres of woods, wetlands, meadows, flowers, all that sort of stuff. It boasts 20 miles of hiking trails, of which he hiked about the equivalent of a half mile. The man knows his limits; he is out to impress nobody.

Two elements of nature deterred him from walking too far. Their scientific names are "bugs" and "frogs." In his old neighborhood of Tewksbury Street, Winthrop, frogs did not exist, and bugs were to be battled with unto the death. The only good bug was a dead bug, and the latter could be viewed in much prominence stuck to the flypaper that hung over the counters of groceries, delis, and butcher shops, not to mention the dead flies floating in the brine of pickle barrels at Kaplow's Creamery.

But here at the state park, he could both see and hear the buggies; they were that close. And he could hear a strange, throaty foghorn sound that a grandma,

walking with a toddler and pushing a carriage, explained to him was the emanation of bullfrogs. He smiled and left for the direction of the gravel parking lot. After all, some of those bugs were dragonflies, aka darning needles, and he remembered that long ago, the word on Tewksbury Street was that those bugs would sew your lips up should you cross them.

He also heard some birds, but they generally do not scare him unless they are vultures or maybe sea gulls on a bombing mission. Later, in the kind of extensive research for which he is legend, he learned that birds seen at this park have included red-bellied woodpeckers, great crested flycatchers, wood thrushes, ovenbirds, northern waterthrushes, and rosebreasted grosbeaks. This too was educational inasmuch as he always had thought an ovenbird was a turkey cooking for Thanksgiving. He also wondered if the great crested flycatcher was as deadly as the brine from kosher pickles, but that question, as of this writing, remained unanswered.

Back at the gravel lot – he can handle gravel – there was a history of the park and the fellow who had donated it to the state. Now, because the urban columnist is a highly trained journalist, he already had figured out that Bradley Palmer State Park was named after Bradley Palmer. Not to boast further as to his journalistic prowess, but he even knew that the word "State" was not the guy's last name.

He skipped over the parts about how you can hike, bike, ride a horse, cross-country ski, fish, canoe, and other ways you can hurt yourself and got down to the biographical information. Palmer, born in 1866, was the son of a Pennsylvania pol and became an attorney, diplomat, and philanthropist, the history marker noted. Palmer built a Tudor Revival mansion as his country estate on this land that he would later donate to the state. He entertained the likes of the Prince of
(continued on page 4)

Connections

From the Bay State Riders Association comes information on a national partnership, Take Pride in America, which has been established to encourage volunteers to initiate programs to improve, among other things, our parks and recreational areas. By participating in workdays, equestrians can show their commitment to preserving and maintaining recreational areas for horse use, and also be recognized for their efforts at the federal level. Check out the website www.takepride.gov for more details. It is important to keep track of the time spent volunteering and working on the places we ride, particularly government owned land, so that our work can be documented and used to show our level of support.

Beal Easement Ride

By Deborah Stanton

The Beal Easement trail makes an enjoyable ride with varied terrain and sights. I met a friend at Ledyard Farm in Wenham, and we hacked from its entrance to Myopia and back on a sunny Wednesday. We crossed Walnut Road to the trail visible from Ledyard's driveway, taking the left fork. This took us through woods, crossing a paved drive and an area of lower land to a field bordering the golf course. Across the field was an entrance onto the golf course, which we crossed by dirt road, stilling our conversation in consideration of the concentrating golfers we saw.

The road continued to the Myopia driveways and parking lots. We passed the barn on the left and headed right from the parking areas to another trail which followed the Beal Easement. This trail wound through the greens, affording lovely views which we experienced rather leisurely because of the large number of golfers sharing the beauty of the day. We held our horses to a quiet walk, halting when nearing anyone preparing to address a golf ball. The horses were curious about the golf activities but remained quiet; my friend and I saw this as a good opportunity to help the horses focus in the midst of distractions. We left the greens, crossing more hilly fields to reenter the woods and finally rejoining the trailhead across from Ledyard at the original fork.

Although quite beautiful at this time of year, the trail promises to be an even more lovely ride in winter when golf would not be a consideration and the greens would be deserted.

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Letters



Dear Don,

I want to extend my sincere thanks for the time you took out of your busy schedule recently to prepare the letter of support for the grant submitted to the Department of Conservation and Recreation for the trail construction at the Dow Brook Conservation Area. It is the endorsement of the local community, and the ability to create access to a range of users that gives this project its strength, and enhances our chances for funding.

It will be a month or two before we hear about our application, but in the meantime we will be busy finalizing our design plans for public access. We are genuinely enthusiastic about opening this property up to the public for recreational and educational purposes, and one way or another we will move forward. Depending on our funding, success depends on how quickly we move ahead!

Thank you again for your help in solidifying our chances for a successful grant application. We sincerely hope our success is the success of all trail users in this region as well!

Best Regards,
Beth OConnor
Open Space Stewardship Coordinator
Town of Ipswich

ECTA Welcomes Mary Lee Mahoney as New Director

Mary Lee Mahoney reports from West Newbury

“We have our first ECTA-sanctioned trail. Sarah and Clif Robinson said they would be happy to have the trail on their property - which joins the River Bend property (public land) - used by ECTA members. They ask that, at least initially, they be called prior to trail use.

George and Nancy MacGown, long-time ECTA members, have agreed to be the major WN area reps, along with Ellen Alden. They are enthusiastic, focused and ready to work hard.

The MacGowns, Ellen, Felicity Beach and I are scheduling a trail ride, inviting ECTA and WNRDC (West Newbury Riding and Driving Club) members on October 3 beginning at 10 a.m. at Pipestave Hill. We will utilize primarily public land (Pipestave & River Bend) along with the Robinson’s land, end back at Pipestave and have a ‘bring your own tailgate’ picnic. People can call me (978-465-3726) or Ellen (978 363 1170) with questions.”

Mary Lee was asked to tell us a bit about herself. She and her late husband, Jerry, founded the West Newbury Riding and Driving Club in the early 70s. “At that time, the focus was similar to ECTA, i.e., trail preservation. That focus got waylaid a little and now, thanks to ECTA, we’re back on the right track,” she says. She remains co-chair of the Club, along with Amy Bresky. Jerry and Mary Lee participated in early ECTA meetings and shared WNRDC organizational experience, which may have initiated the area representative idea in ECTA.

Judi Winchell and Mary Lee founded the Pentucket Pony Club and were the first co-DCs. “We’re happy to see it continue to flourish,” Mary Lee says.

She also served on and was an officer of the Board of Directors of Maudslay State Park’s Friends of the Park group and helped map out the equestrian trails. She and Jerry also assisted in mapping the existing trails at Pipestave Hill soon after it was purchased by the town. She also served on the West Newbury Open Space Committee, participating primarily in trail and open space preservation.

“I guess it’s pretty obvious where my heart is...trail and open space preservation. Although I’m a rider, I also love to walk and cross-country ski and there is nothing better than enjoying nature at its best. I’m truly thrilled to be a part of ECTA and thank you all for the opportunity to serve.”



Mary Lee Mahoney and “Pete”

Going Off the Beaten Path *(continued from page 2)*

Wales and William Howard Taft. He was legal counsel to Sinclair Oil and chairman of United Fruit.

Later, whilst perusing the bird sightings research, the columnist delved a tad more deeply into Palmer. Why? Well, critics of United Fruit contended for decades that the company too often had its way in Latin America and that the US government made sure it would. As for Sinclair, he was very tight in the 1920s with the Republican party and the Warren G. Harding administration, a tad too tight, it turned out. He was one of those two wheeler-dealers who obtained from Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall large government oil reserves. It was a deal done secretly and became known

as the Teapot Dome scandal, Teapot Dome in Wyoming being the oil reserve that Sinclair got.

In return, Sinclair gave Fall at least \$260,000 in bonds. He also contributed \$75,000 to help the GOP retire its campaign debt and loaned the party another \$185,000 of which he recovered only \$100,000. Sinclair missed the legal bullet in the first round of Teapot Dome trials, but he later did time on two counts: contempt of the Senate for refusing to answer questions and contempt of court for using private detectives to shadow jury members at his first trial.

Palmer, who died in 1946, developed banana plantations for

United Fruit, help King C. Gillette create his razor empire, and became a partner in the law firm that came to be known as Palmer and Dodge. He was involved in railroads in Mexico, Guatemala, and Brazil. He was a director of the New England Oil Corp. He was, in short, a guy who knew his way around.

Talk about Byzantine plots, the columnist was left to wonder, what might the ghost of Bradley Palmer whisper in one’s ear? All the columnist could hear, however, were the buzz of buggies, the croaking of frogs, and the rustling of leaves as an occasional breeze wafted through the pines, oaks, and maples of Palmer’s gift to posterity. *(ECTA thanks the author for permission to reprint this article.)*

National Trails Day Walk

By Sue McLaughlin

There was a good turnout for the walk at Appleton Farms on National Trails Day in June. The group started by walking through a pasture occupied by the farm cows and then on to other areas that aren't usually open to the public.

We saw the new bridle path that was made this year. It runs parallel to Waldingfield Road. The tour passed one of the granite monuments on the property, observed a huge weeping beech tree, and then saw the site of a large house that was once on the property. Katrina Hart brought along



pictures of the house and grounds so we could see the way it was at its best. The overgrown garden area and kennel were reminders of the history of the farm. Wayne Castonguay, the manager of Appleton Farms and an ECTA advisor, told us about the farm's past as well as future plans.

The group was shown a small hill that was once the site of the "Hunters Oak," a large tree (now gone) where the many horses that had hunted from the farm were buried.

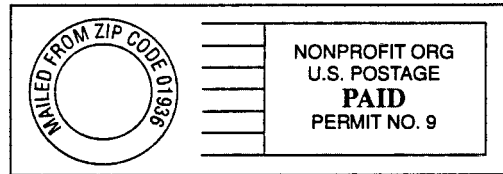
The walk then went through part of the Great Pasture and along a new walking area where we were told of the train station built by the Appletons. We traveled over the train bridge to the farm buildings where refreshments were served.



A trail across from Appleton Farms,
on Waldingfield Road, is marked
invisibly by an ECTA trail sign.



Essex County Trail Association
Post Office Box 358
Hamilton, MA 01936



Poker Trail Ramble

Sunday, September 19, 2004

On Sunday, September 19, 2004 we will hold a Poker Trail Ramble at Bradley Palmer State Park in Topsfield, Massachusetts. People may start at 9:30 a.m. Last out will be 11 a.m. Route will be up to one and a half hours in length. Lunch is included with every entry. There is no rain date. Entries will be returned.

Each person is given a playing card on departure. Three additional cards will be picked up from buckets along the trail. The final card is given upon return. The best poker hands win cash and other prizes.

We welcome walkers, equestrians, and bicyclists on separate routes. Please come and enjoy the day with us in the park. For more information, please call Kay at 978-768-6275 or Sue at 978-468-7715.

Entry Form

**Essex County Trail Association Presents
Poker Trail Ramble
Sunday, September 19, 2004
Everyone out between 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.**

Best Hands Win Cash Prizes

Equestrians, bicyclists, and walkers are welcome

Separate routes

Come enjoy Bradley Palmer State Park, Asbury Street, Topsfield, MA

Cost: \$15 ECTA Members \$20.00 Non-members Includes Lunch

No rain date – entry returned

Checks made payable to ECTA

All entries must be received by September 14, 2004

Mail to: KL Joseph, 146 Western Avenue, Essex, MA 01929

Tel: Kay 978-768-6275 or Sue 978-468-7715

Please Circle: _____

I am a(n) Equestrian Bicyclist Walker / **Lunch choice** Ham&Cheese Turkey

Name _____

Street _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number _____

Please Sign:

Release Statement: I hereby agree to make no claims, demands or suits against the Essex County Trail Association, Bradley Palmer State Park, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or their agents or volunteers for any accident or damage which may occur to any rider, attendant, animal, bicyclist, walker or equipment. I participate voluntarily, acknowledging that horse sports and bicycling involve inherent dangerous risk.

(Must be signed by parent if under 18.)