



Essex County **News** Trail Association

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Fall 2005

From the President

Don Curiale

Work usually takes a little vacation during the summer season...well, that hasn't happened for the Essex County Trail Association in 2005. In fact, we are on overload.

ECTA has closed and signed four ECTA/private landowner easements for passive recreation. We are working with the Essex County Greenbelt to secure an Ipswich trail easement as well as two additional easement projects in West Newbury. In addition, the Board of Directors has formed a new sub-committee to work with Bradley Palmer and state officials to create a detailed trail management plan for Bradley Palmer and neighboring local trails. This plan will include maps, costs, equipment, labor, trail conditions, material costs and other variables. We hope this management plan will become a template that we can use for other towns in the future.

ECTA also intends to use this management plan to approach major foundations and/or corporations that might be sympathetic to our cause and mission. With our private/public partnership, we hope to raise significant funding of \$50,000 - \$100,000. Our goal is to restore major trails and

byways in Bradley Palmer and its surrounding trails and make them the "showcase" of the North Shore. If you have any suggestions or foundation or corporate contacts, please let me know at 978-356-7656. This would be extremely helpful.

Carol Lloyd, our Coordinator, is also working on permitting a beaver deceiver behind the Pingree School in Hamilton, an emergency trail repair (a horse and rider went down in this bog) and a trail repair on private property. Skip Lisle, our professional "beaver deceiver" installer, was here for several work days. He worked miracles in Bradley Palmer. You will notice that when you enter the park off Asbury Street, the water that was on the main driveways has receded. He cleaned, installed, and fine tuned deceivers in several locations at the cost of thousands of dollars.

Finally, your Organization continues to perform its regular trail maintenance in our six towns of Essex, Topsfield, Hamilton, Ipswich, Wenham, and West Newbury. This regular trail maintenance includes the Pingree Reservation in Hamilton, Bio Labs in Ipswich, and Bradley Palmer. The Board is discussing the option to purchase or lease equip-

ment that would be more cost effective when mowing or cutting back brush.

Events

Waldingfield Carriage and Driving Event

The Waldingfield Carriage and Driving Event was held in July at Groton House Farm. Holly Pulsifer has organized this Myopia Driving Club event for the past 17 years to benefit ECTA. This year Holly handed us a check for \$1100 for our trail maintenance.

ECTA wishes to thank Ann Getchell, the Winthrop Family, and Holly for their support and generosity.

Trail Ride

The annual Waldingfield Fall Trail Ride will take place on Sunday, October 2 at 2 p.m. (note new time). Look for your invitation in the mail or on our website at ectaonline.org. No rain date...cancelled in heavy rain. No fee.

Poker Ramble

This year's Poker Ramble will take

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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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From the President

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place on September 18 in Bradley Palmer State Park. ECTA Area Reps Kay Joseph and Sue McLaughlin are organizing the Ramble to include walkers, bikers, and riders. Look for "signups" in the mail or on the web for fun, prizes, and laughs. No rain date.

Marathon Race

ECTA will host a Marathon on November 12th as a fundraiser for trail maintenance. ECTA Directors Rick Silverman, Ann Getchell, and Coordinator Carol Lloyd are organizing this new fundraiser. They will design several courses with varying distances. We hope to attract as many runners as possible who will enjoy courses over some of the most beautiful private land on the North Shore. Enter, volunteer, and come out for a new event for ECTA.

Day at the Races

In May, ECTA held a successful Day at the Races at Suffolk Downs. For this particular event, ECTA raised over \$2200. We wish to thank our attendees, Kay Joseph, volunteers, and business contributors to the Balloon Sale for their help and donations.



Trail Talk

Please remember that when you ride, walk, jog, or cross-country ski through private land, you are the "guest" of the landowner.

It is inappropriate to pass through private property and criticize or complain about how the landowner is using the property. Be grateful, say thank you, and mind your own business. Enjoy and be safe.

Patton Property

The Patton property in Hamilton has deer fences. Please be aware and ride with caution.

Turner Hill Trail Easement OK'd

Turner Hill manager Charlie Reed and Barbara Ostberg of the Ipswich Bay Circuit Trail Association asked the selectmen to approve the completion of trails through the residential portion of the 311-acre property on Topsfield Road that includes an 18-hole golf course and homes that are currently being built.

While 90 percent of the land is open space and the trails on that land have been protected and recorded, the segment snaking through the residential portion must be protected as well, Reed said.

Reed said the trails would be open to hikers, bikers, and horses most of the year. Only on tournament days would access be restricted, he said. "We'll let the town know when the trails will be shut down," he said.

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Beaver Deceivers and How They Work

from an email sent by Skip Lisle, inventor and builder of the deceivers

Here's the deal. Just like at all the other trail sites, trails were created in ancient beaver flowages after the original dams had completely disappeared because of the fur trade. Unlike roads that were also constructed everywhere through beaver habitat (low-gradient areas on small streams) the trails were not built up. They are the lowest human-property features of them all in wetlands.

Pipe systems cannot, and do not, completely eliminate beaver dams. When a pipe goes into a dam, the dam is actually a part of the system. The dam ensures that if the beavers leave, and then new ones return, they will work the same spot and not, for example, just upstream from the pipe system rendering it useless and a waste of money. What good pipe systems do is control the size, or vertical growth, of the dam. Therefore, I may be able to remove millions of gallons of water and several vertical feet from a wetland system, but it is not possible to (thankfully) entirely drain it.

The best thing the Association can do is to abandon or move these Trails so the ancient wetland systems can be fully restored by beavers. In the absence of a willingness to do that, the best thing you can do is to use flow devices combined with moving, or adding fill to, trails. Without another fur trade, the reality is the trails are going to be wetter than they were during, and immediately after, that anomalous and ecologically devastating event.

Unless they want to begin a fur trade of their own, I hope ECTA and its members can, finally, understand these facts, and this new reality.



Installation of a pipe system beaver deceiver at Bradley Palmer State Park. Photo by Tracey Dejong.

Beaver Management Program -- Are Beaver Dams Protected by Regulation?

The following is an email from John Hamilton of the Hamilton Conservation Commission. John is responding to a question about 321 CMR 2.02 regulation which protects the construction of beaver dams.

We are aware of this regulation. The jurisdiction of Mass Wildlife is coincident with ours over wetlands in our town. Every beaver action taken in our town is the subject of a formal notice of intent filed pursuant to the Wetlands Protection Act and the Hamilton Conservation Bylaw.

That said, the beaver management program in our town has been undertaken entirely by the Essex County Trail Association as a public service (and at great expense). The expertise is provided by a nationally prominent authority on beaver management, Skip Lisle. I attended a seminar conducted by Skip at the Massachusetts Audubon Society just before our program began. I was convinced at the time and remain fully convinced to this day that our

program avoids the need to use the emergency procedures described in the regulation that you have forwarded. We do not destroy beaver dams. We use devices which confuse the beavers and which are therefore called "beaver deceivers." The effect of the devices is to reduce the water level without injuring the dam or lodge at all. The amount and depth of water behind the dam has nothing to do with the availability of food for beavers. It does have to do with the level of protection afforded against predators.

In the whole I believe that the beaver management program which has been enacted in Hamilton is the best possible combination of respect for beavers and protection of pre-existing economic uses. The alternative is indeed destruction of the beaver habitat under the Department of Fish and Game regulations. All in all, as a result of the Essex County Trail Association program, our town has a healthy beaver population and very little public clamor for its eradication.

The Incredible Shrinking Horse or Beware of Beaver Fever

By Deborah Stanton

My friends nicknamed my mare “the incredible shrinking horse,” but it took time to diagnose her illness and even longer to treat and stabilize her. After four months, she still looks skeletal, but is gaining weight and on the road to recovery. I write to warn ECTA members of a danger that has possibly increased locally with the increase in beaver population.

This health risk, Giardiasis, is known as “Beaver Fever” because beavers are excellent hosts for spreading Giardia, the amoeba-like parasites that cause the disease. The amoebas attach to a host’s small intestine walls and block absorption of nutrients, causing diarrhea, nausea, weight loss, and abdominal pain. They eventually encase themselves into cysts which exit the host in its feces. These cysts can live at least two months in water. Moreover, the cysts can remain, unbroken, in a host for some time, until some other stress triggers their release. Giardia are extremely contagious, although it is possible for an animal or person to test positive while remaining symptom-free, in which case treatment is not required. But my experience was of a very sick horse.

When the spring thaws began, I noticed my pastured horse drinking from puddles frequently, in spite of my provision of clean water. I also recall allowing her to drink from streams when walking her. I cannot know what other animals may have also traveled through the puddles or waterways, and I believe one stream was connected to an area of beaver activity.

As spring progressed, her manure grew runnier until she had obvious diarrhea. The first veterinary treatment addressed probable inflammatory bowel disease, for she had shown mild symptoms of this for years. After the course of treatment, she worsened. Diet change did not help. She began

losing weight, the diarrhea became explosive, and she stopped eating well. Fecal testing showed positive for Giardia so she was given a five-day course of Metronidazole antibiotics. She improved dramatically for two days, then seemed to crash, for she had been sick for a long time, and the antibiotic is harsh on even healthy horse digestive systems. Hospitalization gave the opportunity to run more tests, which concluded that Giardia was no longer present but inflammatory bowel disease had been triggered.

I was told by all veterinarians who handled her that Giardia is common in dogs but not often found to be symptomatic in horses in this area. It is probable that my horse’s extreme

illness was compounded by the stress of fighting a bone infection earlier in the year, and by a previously manageable inflammatory gut response. However, the expense of treatments, the difficulty of nursing a sick animal for a long time, and the anguish of watching her struggle cause me to determine that I will never again allow my horse to drink from unknown water sources while trail riding. Because beaver activity is recognized in many areas abutting local trails, it is advisable for other riders to do likewise, and for dog owners to prevent their dogs from drinking in suspect areas. It is much safer to bring with you clean water for your animal.



Waldingfield Driving Event photos by Karen Denoia



Left: Two types of flow devices known as beaver deceivers. Both were recently constructed to resolve the problem of trails flooded by beaver dams in Bradley Palmer. The top photo is a pipe flow device, the bottom uses a trapezoidal design. Photos by Tracey Dejong.



Right: Pat Tataronis Orcutt standing at her tack sale table at the ECTA Equine Paraphernalia Sale about two years ago. Photo by Pam Mansfield-Loomis.



Pat Tataronis Orcutt

We lost a long-time friend and supporter of our association when Pat Tataronis Orcutt passed away this August 27th. She came to our first meetings in the early 80s, representing the Rowley Riding and Driving Club and was always an enthusiastic member of ECTA. We extend our sympathies to Dr. Bob Orcutt, Sr. and the Orcutt family.

-- Susanna Colloredo

Nancy's Corner

(reprinted with permission from Appleton Farms News, Summer 2005)

The southwest corner of the Farm at the junction of Highland Street and Cutler Road is called Nancy's Corner. [A] 1932 photograph is historically interesting in that Cutler Road was then called Farms Road and, as the sign says, was "not an automobile road" (some say it still isn't). In the distance may be seen the allee that leads from the Highland Street parking lot to the Grass Rides, and also a barn where the present parking lot is.

Who was Nancy? Here are some clues:

Who was Robert Gould Shaw's wife when they lived across the street and built the present Groton House?

Who was the first woman MP in the British House of Commons?

Who said to Churchill "If I was your wife, I'd put poison in your coffee"? (Bonus points if you know his answer.)

What American girl became one of the richest and most famous women in England?

The answer to all these questions is Lady Nancy Astor. Born in Virginia, she was one of the famous Langhorne sisters. Her first husband was Robert Gould Shaw II, nephew of the leader of the black Massa-

chusetts 54th Infantry, and together they bought the property that is now Groton House Farm. After divorcing Shaw she went to England and married Waldorf Astor, taking over his seat in the House of Commons in 1919 when he went to the House of Lords.

Why is Nancy's Corner named after her? It may be because she lived across the street, or, as some say, because it was here that she met Jimmie Appleton to go riding in the Grass Rides, but the most likely theory is that she fell off her horse near here. Little did she then know that about 40 years later Winston Churchill would say to her, "and if I was your husband, I'd drink it!"

— Oliver Wolcott