



Essex County *News* Trail Association

Volume 27 Number 1

Spring/Summer 2009

Blazing New Trails

Chairman's Report

Susie Banta

2009 is the year for ECTA to blaze new trails, and we have been hard at work doing just that, even as a harsh New England winter kept all but the most avid cross-country skiers and snow shoers off the trails and by their fire-sides.

The very active and committed Board of Directors is meeting monthly, operating with six standing committees, including Governance, Nominating, Finance, Fundraising, Communications, and Trail Management. We have established The President's Fund in honor of our past President, Don Curiale. This fund is the focus of our Fundraising campaign this year .

Introducing New Executive Director

Our new Executive Director, Alex Van Alen has been on the job only a few weeks, but he has hit the trails running, getting to know ECTA, our trail communities, and bringing his knowledge and enthusiasm to our cause.

Alex brings a life-long passion for and history of involvement in land conservation and trail protection. His education includes a BA in Environmental Conservation and a MS in Ecology.



Susie Banta, ECTA Chairman, Alex Van Alen, new ECTA Executive Director, and Susan Lawrence, Vice Chair, at the ECTA Annual Meeting.

Although he grew up in Chester County, Pennsylvania, a year spent here in 1999-2000 working for the Trustees of Reservations, convinced him that the North Shore was a special place and was where he wanted to raise his family. He lives in Ipswich with his wife and two sons and is, of course, an avid trail user.

2009 Annual Meeting

We held our 2009 Annual Meeting on Tuesday, April 14 at the Gould Barn in Topsfield. The combined draw of introducing Alex Van Alen and paying tribute to Don Curiale brought out over 80 members, one of the largest meetings yet.

In 2008, although in organizational transition, ECTA juggled and completed many projects, including:

- ◆ 3 new easements, completed or in process
 - ◆ Completed major trail maintenance, include bridge building, on six separate trails
 - ◆ Completed and have in process Trail Management Plans in Ipswich, Topsfield and West Newbury in addition to the TMP in Hamilton.
 - ◆ Trail Maps are now available for Ipswich, Hamilton/Wenham, and we are working on Essex, Topsfield, and West Newbury
- Thank you Carol Lloyd for leading the charge on these projects.

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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

ECTA Board of Directors

Chair Susie Banta
Vice Chair Susan Lawrence
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Katy Redmond
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Executive Director Alex Van Alen
Director of Trail Management Carol Lloyd

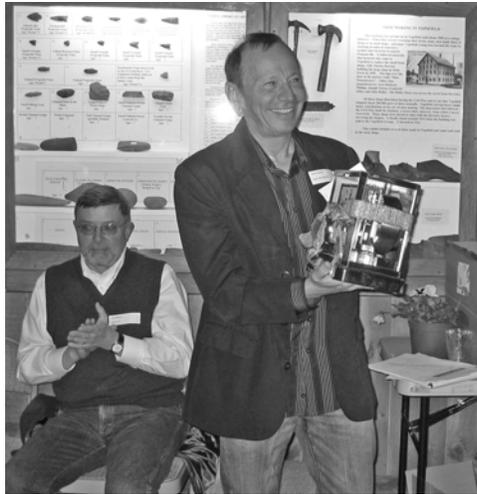
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Photos from ECTA Annual Meeting

Top: Past President Don Curiale accepts a gift of an atmospheric clock for his many years of dedication to ECTA. Bottom: The Gould Barn in Topsfield was a comfortable setting for the 80+ members who attended the Annual Meeting, including Betsy Krusen, front, looking at one of the trail maps provided.



2009 Trail Projects

The list for 2009 is no less impressive, including maintenance projects in Bradley Palmer, Winthrop Causeway, Pingree School area, Gordon Conwell, Dow Park, Willowdale beavers and Sears' causeway. Because success happily generates success, the Board is developing criteria for project approval which will be available on our website.

Website Updates

Speaking of our website, please stay tuned for a major redesign. Our Communications Committee and Alex are working with Alice Winthrop for an updated, user-friendly website.

ECTA Events

Finally, we are already off to a great start to a number of fun events this year.

Kay Joseph and Sue McLaughlin once again staged our very popular and successful ECTA Tack Sale on

April 25. In spite of, or maybe because of, the difficult economy (what better place to get some real bargains!) the sale was busy as usual. Thank you Kay and Sue and all the wonderful volunteers.

And, right around the corner is the National Trails Day, Saturday, June 6. Besides teaming up with Appleton Farms for their special program, "To Eat or Not to Eat, Wild Edibles 101 with Tom Adams," 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. ECTA will be sponsoring a fun family day celebrating our trails, and the activities and community they support. See the special insert for details on this fun day.

Please visit the website at www.ectaonline.org for our calendar of events, which will be updated very shortly. Are you receiving announcements and updates by email? If you do not receive the ECTA online newsletter, please let us know, and send us your email address. Contact alan@ectaonline.org.

Executive Director's Report

Alex Van Alen

I am not a native of the North Shore, but when I am mountain biking up to Moon Hill in Bradley Palmer State Park, or spying the warblers and orioles of spring with my boys in the Manchester-Essex Woodlands, or my snow shoes are tromping through the snowy dunes of Crane Beach, there is a connection that goes beyond the generations needed to be a native. As a newcomer with a young family, I feel privileged to be able to explore such a vast expanse of open lands, and am thankful that the members, landowners and supporters of the Essex County Trail Association have led the charge in keeping trails open and maintained for everyone to enjoy for 27 years. This good work, under the leadership of Susanna Colloredo and Don Curiale, has laid the foundation to meet a slew of challenges and opportunities ahead.

Everyone reading this newsletter is

aware of the challenges posed by the development of open spaces that we once walked or rode, and also the challenges of raising our children with the threats of too much screen-time or over-scheduled play time. Trails provide the antidote for these and other problems and ECTA has strengthened its resolve to keep our trails open and getting our families and friends out there to explore and enjoy them.

Gearing up for this next chapter, your board has made a strong commitment to accelerate the protection of our incredible trail system by capturing the attention of the existing trail users who may not know what ECTA does, and also by introducing prospective members to the trail system. A growth in ECTA membership means an increase in people who value and respect our trails and the lands and waters they cross, and that, coupled with our essential work of trail protection and maintenance, will be a real measuring stick for our success.

You will be hearing more about our website in the months to come, designed largely for the purpose of making it easy for our members to plan a hike, ride or ski with improved mapping and descriptions of trails and preserves. A calendar of events and walks will allow members to enjoy parts of our trail network that they may not know about. If you are a birder, you may have a chance to visit woodlands that are open only for ECTA members. If you are a mountain biker, you can ride in an event or help maintain some of your favorite trails with fellow trail users. If you are a cross country skier, you can join us for a ski trip ending at a pub for a drink and good cheer next winter.

On the news we hear of tough times, but ECTA is plunging forward stronger than ever. Whether you are a native or a newcomer, and whether you ride, hike, bird or bike, the Essex County Trail Association is here to ensure that you and your family can enjoy the trails that lead you to places both familiar and new.

ECTA Equine Expo

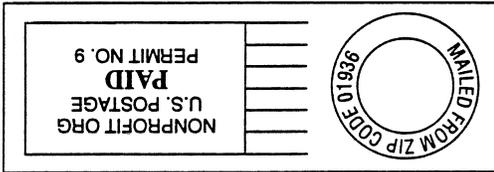


Susan Wong sits on one of the ring-side benches she made and displays some of the artwork she and her mother, Gail, and sister Sara bring to the show each year.

Kaylee Angstadt worked at the Pentucket Pony Club booth.



Canterbrook Equestrian provided pony rides to entertain the kids. The annual ECTA Equine Expo was held April 25th at the Topsfield fairgrounds.



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Join ECTA for Some Exciting New Events as We Blaze New Trails!

Spring

June 6
National Trails Day
Bradley Palmer State Park

Summer

July 12
Waldingfield Carriage Driving
Summer trail walk



Fall

October 24
Run for the Trails
Fall trail walk
Equestrian trail ride

Winter

Pub ski and hike

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