



## A View from the Chair

Dear Friends,

Once again, as I write, we are experiencing the glorious last days of summer and early fall that call to each of us to be outside on the trails. The health benefits of being outside gain more recognition every day.

ECTA is celebrating its 35-year anniversary, and from the beginning, ECTA has been sustained by volunteers... volunteers with a passion to protect the countryside so that anyone could enjoy the beautiful trail network. Now, 35 years later, volunteers are still the backbone of ECTA. With only two part-time staff, we maintain more than 450 miles of trails and hold thirty easements! We are grateful to each of you for all that you have done and all that you continue to do.

This year we have been very fortunate to receive grants from the Institution for Savings, New England Biolabs Foundation and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. We look forward to continuing our mission to preserve, maintain and respect our beautiful countryside with their help and yours.

Whether you are a runner, cyclist, cross country skier, equestrian or simply enjoy taking a walk in the woods, please help us by becoming a member of ECTA.

See you on the trails,

*Susan*

Susan Lawrence  
Chair, Board of Directors



*Artwork by Jill Mascianica*

## Essex County Trail Association Membership Drive

**REFER A NEW MEMBER AND HELP  
ECTA REPAIR MORE TRAILS**

Help us do more by increasing our membership. Refer a friend or family member to join today. Every membership and donation dollar matters. How do we use those dollars? We buy gravel, mow trails, clear downed trees, build boardwalks, install culverts, and permit projects just to name a few. We need your help to preserve and maintain the trails.

***TO RENEW OR SIGN UP A NEW MEMBER GO TO  
ECTAONLINE.ORG AND CLICK JOIN NOW!***

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### Summer Solstice Party Sponsors

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(Sponsors as of September 1, 2017)



## Upcoming 2017 Events

**Oct 17 ECTA Night at Ipswich Ale Brewery**

**Oct 22 Autumn Trail Ride**

**Nov 24 Too Much Turkey Hike with DCR**

Visit the ECTA website at [www.ectaonline.org](http://www.ectaonline.org) for details and for the latest updates. Do you receive e-mailed updates from ECTA? If not, please be sure we have your current e-mail address. Contact [office@ectaonline.org](mailto:office@ectaonline.org) to connect with us. Become a fan of ECTA on Facebook to keep up to date with ECTA happenings and give us your feedback!

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# Solving the Culvert Dilemma in Willowdale

by Carol Lloyd, Director of Trail Management

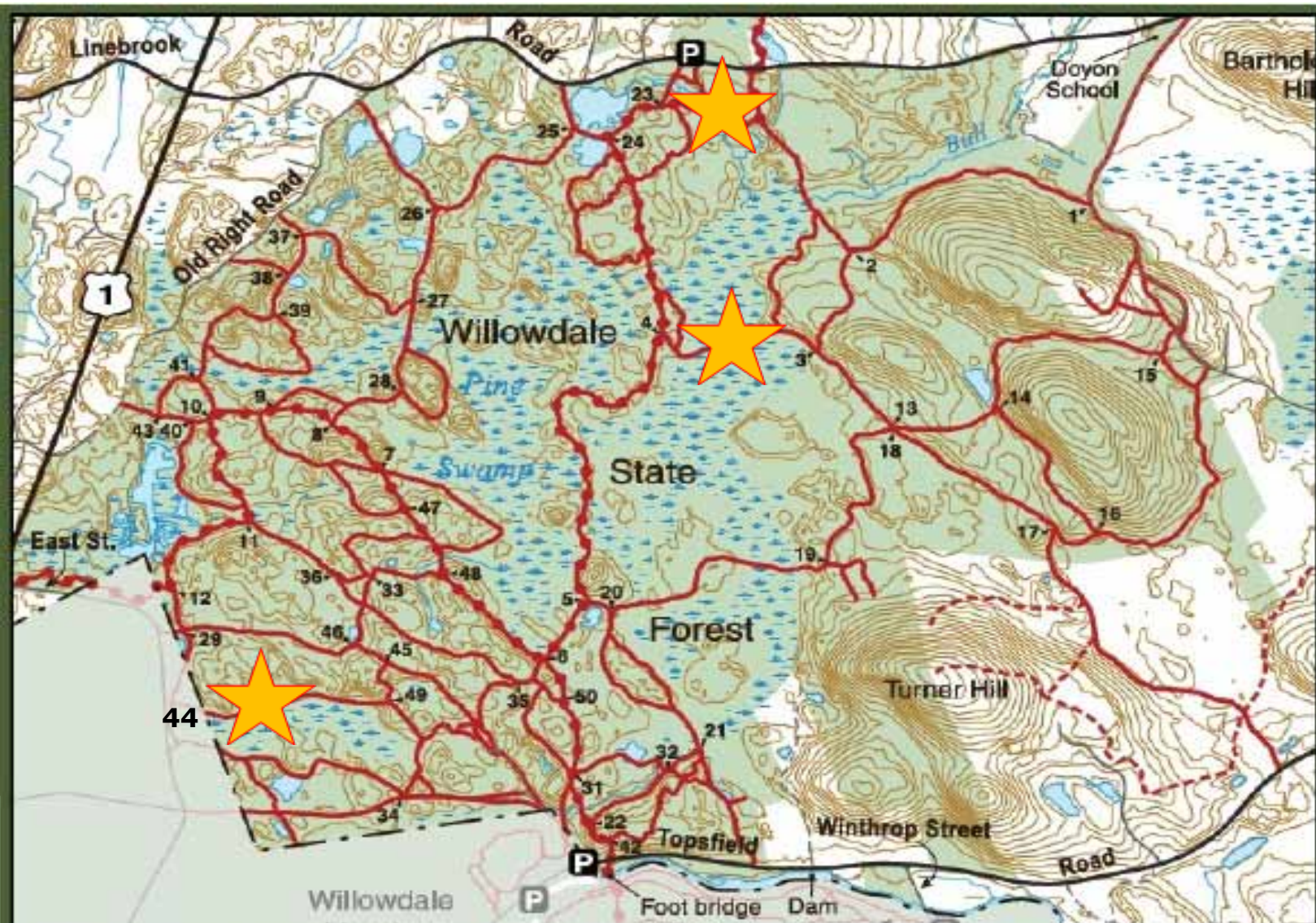


Essex County Trail Association has been ardently working on behalf of the trail users of our community to help maintain many of the trails we all love for the past 35 years. Much of the work is done behind the scenes, and can be quite complicated. We would like to highlight one such project that has gotten the whole community involved in solving a puzzle of a problem—culvert replacements in Willowdale State Forest.

## Background

Willowdale State Forest is primarily located in Ipswich, MA, and is managed by the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The trails of Willowdale, which are utilized by every kind of trail user, are generally in good shape because they are old carriage roads and have a very solid base. However, the problem in Willowdale is water. A quick look at the Willowdale map will show you that Willowdale, which borders the Ipswich River, is speckled with ponds, streams, and large pockets of wetlands. Over time, many culverts have failed and some of the water levels have risen so that they now go over trails that were once dry. The ECTA's goal was to address these water issues by getting approval to replace some failing culverts and install new culverts. This process ended up being trickier than expected.

*Continued on Page 4*



**Willowdale State Forest - East**

Ipswich





### Solving the Culvert Dilemma, Cont. from Pg. 3

To begin this project, the ECTA applied for a Recreational Trails Grant from DCR in 2015. Between the time when we applied for the grant and when we were given the OK to proceed, the state regulations regarding culverts changed. Where it was once okay to replace a two-foot culvert in kind, it now had to be 1.2 x the bankful width of the stream or river. This meant that a two-foot culvert would have to be replaced with one measuring five feet or more depending on the water crossing. When the ECTA broached in kind culvert replacement with the Ipswich Conservation Commission, the local officials who enforce the state's Wetlands Protection Act, we were told it would be a "non-starter" due to the stricter regulations, and they suggested putting bridges and boardwalks in instead of culverts. While boardwalks are a good solution, they pose problems for horses. Over time they can become slippery and horses can be afraid of them, causing unsafe situations. They are also expensive. If we went with the larger culvert that met the updated guidelines, that would also be very expensive to both purchase and install. We needed to find an arch culvert that was light enough to be able to install on a trail some distance off the road and strong enough to support horses and occasional traffic while being affordable. Our goal was to be able to install a culvert for less than \$10,000. It was important to solve this problem and to submit to the Conservation Commission a Notice of Intent (NOI) to set a precedent for future work.



*Trail # 44 in Willowdale is off East Street in Topsfield. In 2015, a boardwalk was built as a temporary fix above a collapsed 2-foot culvert (left). Two years later, you can see how much erosion has taken place along the banks of the stream. You can barely see the crushed culvert under the boardwalk (top right)! Thankfully, this temporary fix will be replaced by an "Enviro-Span" arched culvert made by Soleno (bottom right, photo from soleno.com).*







*As you can tell from these photos, these two sites are in desperate need of some TLC. On the left, water is high on the trail between 3 and 4 because the gravel is acting like a dam. The addition of three culverts along this trail will improve hydrologic connectivity and restore system continuity. On the right, the culvert on the esker across from Marini's farm.*

*Photos by DeRosa Environmental*

## **Process**

The ECTA worked in close collaboration with DCR staff to troubleshoot the culvert dilemma. We also worked with New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA), local running clubs, and the equestrian community to make a list of problem areas in Willowdale, so that we could permit several locations at one time with one NOI (and then have three years to do the work). We decided to focus on the trail between 3 and 4, the culvert on trail 44, and the culvert on the esker across from Marini's farm.

To figure out what kind of culvert would work best at these sites, fit into our budget, and be accepted by the Conservation Commission, the ECTA got help from a variety of professionals in the field. DeRosa Environmental is the firm we used to prepare the NOI. In addition to them, we met with Brian Kelder from Ipswich River Watershed Association and Tim Chorey from the Department of Environmental Restoration (DER), both of whom are experts in water flow and culvert design. We wanted to be able to go back to the Conservation Commission with an approvable solution. In the end, we obtained permission for the new culverts on 3 - 4 as a result of their recommendation. Both Brian and Tim said that because the causeway on this trail was built up with gravel at one point, a dam had been created where there once was none. They said that 3 small culverts would improve the drainage in this watershed.

As for the other sites, we looked at many different types of culverts. Because the width had to be so great, the culvert really had to be arched to avoid having to bury half of it as much as 3 feet. Many of the arched culverts are concrete and are just too heavy to be able to install on a trail that is significantly off the road. DER sent information on the culverts that they use, which are beautiful, but they were almost \$10,000 just to purchase. That didn't include the cost to install them. We finally found the "Enviro-Span" made by Soleno. This is a polymer culvert that comes in 3.5' sections. It is light and easy to install and is affordable. Eureka!

## **Funding**

Many thanks go out to DCR and New England Biolabs Foundation for their financial support of this project. DCR's help allowed us to permit this project and do work to install new pipes on the trail between 3 - 4. New England Biolabs Foundation awarded the ECTA a grant to help purchase and install a new "Enviro-Span" culvert on trail 44! Without the help of our wonderful partners we wouldn't be able to do this important work.

## **Next Steps**

We received approval to proceed from the Ipswich Conservation Commission on July 5, 2017. We are waiting until the fall to do the work because the water level should be significantly lower by then.



*Susan Lawrence (ECTA Chair) and David Wilson at Flying High Stables*

## **Paying it Forward** by Jennifer Taylor Ahern

As many of you will remember, relentless snowfall plagued all of us during the winter of 2014-2015. As a result of this, our barn in Andover, along with many other barns in New England, suffered a roof collapse. We were then left with the dilemma of finding a new home for our Flying High Stables family. Fortunately, the owner of Flying High Stables, Mr. David Wilson, employing much effort and exploration, was able to secure a new home for us and the twenty-four (24) horses of Flying High Stables. We moved into our new home at 354 Highland Street in South Hamilton on May 1st, 2015.

One of the deciding factors in our choice of the Highland Street location was the allure of the amazing trail system that ECTA manages. I, as a trail-riding enthusiast, found myself wanting to do more to support this wonderful organization. So, after having a conversation with Dave Wilson, I decided to rent a sales table at the 22nd Annual Equine Expo in Topsfield. We received many donations of equine-related items from members of our Flying High Stables family members, and also donations from other horse enthusiasts, for our sales table. Through this effort we were able to have raised \$741 for ECTA. At the Summer Solstice event on June 17th, 2017, it was our great pleasure to have presented this \$741 check to the ECTA in appreciation and recognition of the wonderful trail system that we are all so blessed with.

Thank you for all that you do.



## **ECTA Receives Three Grants!**

We are happy to announce that Essex County Trail Association has been awarded three grants in 2017. With the help of our longtime supporters the Institution for Savings, the New England Biolabs Foundation, and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, we are looking forward to achieving many of our trail maintenance goals in the next several months and years. Thank you so much to our generous supporters for helping us fund the quality work we do in our communities.

### **Institution for Savings**

The Institution for Savings has given ECTA a generous grant of \$10,000 a year for 5 years. We have compiled a list of trail restoration projects, and look forward to starting work.

### **New England Biolabs Foundation**

ECTA is delighted to announce that we have been awarded a \$5,000 grant from the New England Biolabs Foundation to help fund our Willowdale Culvert Replacement project on trail #44 in Willowdale State Forest.

### **MA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation**

ECTA has received a wonderful Recreational Trails Grant from DCR in the amount of \$7,775. This grant will allow us to acquire materials for the repair of existing trails in Bradley Palmer State Park.



*22nd Annual Equine EXPO  
Sue LaVoie, Jennifer Ahern and Erin McClintock*



## ECTA Events Highlights (April - September 2017)



**Rail Trail Bike Ride** ECTA Trail Steward and Topsfield Rail Trail Committee Chairman Joe Geller lead a group of bikers from Topsfield to Peabody and back on April 8th. The 14 mile round trip ride was a perfect way to usher in spring and enjoy the Topsfield Linear Common Rail Trail.

**Annual Meeting** Friends and supports gathered on April 11th for our annual opportunity to catch up on the important work we do on the trails. We honored long-time ECTA friend Jerry Kenney.

**Turkey Hill Volunteer Work Day** ECTA partnered with the town of Ipswich to celebrate Earth Day with a volunteer trail work day on April 22nd. The Turkey Hill Conservation Area trail was spruced up by a fantastic group.

**22nd Annual Equine Expo** The 22nd Annual Equine EXPO took place April 29th in the arena building at the Topsfield Fairgrounds. There were all types of vendors selling a wide variety of equine items and services. The demonstrations included how to harness a driving horse, mustangs, gaited rescues, and trick training. The silent auction had many great items up for bid. A steady stream of buyers made this popular event a success for ECTA. Thank you again to all the sponsors and volunteers. The EXPO could not take place without you. Plans are now underway for the 23rd Equine EXPO on Saturday, April 28th, 2018 from 9-3 at our regular location, the arena building at the Topsfield Fairgrounds. Donations are now being accepted of all new and used horse related items. We are also looking for volunteers (new and returning), vendors (new and returning), and demonstration ideas. Please try and help us out with this very large event. The annual Equine EXPO is one of our biggest fundraising events and we thank Kay and Sue for their many years of running this all to benefit ECTA. Contact Kay at kljoreo@aol.com for more information.

**3rd Annual Spring for the Trails Half Marathon** On Saturday, May 13th, ECTA hosted our third half-marathon (13.1 miles) on some of the beautiful trails in Willowdale State Forest. 160 ran the race, which was a part of the 2017 North Shore Trail Series sponsored by New England Running Co. In 1st place was Dan Grimm with a finishing time of 1:19:36. Lyne Bessette, the first female, finished in 1:33:52.

**Summer Solstice Party** At our annual fund-raising party in June, ECTA celebrated 35 years of service under the tent at Groton House Farm. Our silent auction offered bidders an array of hot-ticket items – from a private yoga session to a mountain bike from Seaside Cycle to \$5,000 worth of tree service from MayerTree. Thanks to our supporters, we raised over \$13,000. We couldn't do it without the support of sponsors and gift donors so a big thank you to all!

**13th Annual Run for the Trails** On September 16th, 95 runners came out to join us for this 5 and 10 mile race over public and private trails in Hamilton. Congratulations to the first place runners, Christian Villescascas (0:32:39) for the 5 mile run and Colin Carroll (0:59:25) for the 10 mile run. New this year was our team competition! Two team prizes were awarded for each of the largest team present and the fastest team. Seven Running Club teams were represented, including Central Mass Striders, CraftConcept Racing, and Gil's Athletic Club. The Merrimack Valley Striders took home the \$100 prize for its enthusiastic participation of 24 runners. Team Gloucester was the fastest team placing its five scoring runners (3 men and 2 women) in the top ten finishers. Team Gloucester also won a \$100 prize, which was also generously provided by sponsor Rich May, attorneys of Boston.



*Summer Solstice Party*



*Turkey Hill Volunter Work Day, photo by C. Viola*



*13th Annual Run for the Trails*



Essex County Trail Association  
P.O. Box 358  
Hamilton, MA 01936



*Spring Trail Ride*



*Labor in Vain Band at Summer Solstice Party*



*35th Anniversary Cake at Summer Party*



Please mail your tax deductible gift to: ECTA, P.O. Box 358, Hamilton, MA 01936  
Contributions can be made by credit card at [www.ectaonline.org](http://www.ectaonline.org) or by phone at 978-468-1133

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Enclosed please find my check payable to ECTA in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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