



Thoughts from Susan

With fall and winter on our doorstep, it is gratifying to look back on the summer and some of ECTA's accomplishments and events. It was a busy spring and summer beginning with ECTA's first ever half-marathon in Willowdale State Forest in early May, which gathered over 100 runners. In June, we held our annual ECTAthlon and the Summer Solstice Gala. September brought with it the annual Run for the Trails and the Rail Trail Bike ride, led by our long time trail steward, Joe Geller. Read more details about all our events in this newsletter, including a list of currently scheduled events for 2016.

We have been very fortunate this year to receive support in the form of grants from three organizations; the Fields Pond Foundation, New England Biolabs Foundation, and the Department of Conservation & Recreation for a variety of projects. These grants, together with contributions from our members, have allowed us to plan a long list of projects for the coming months. In addition, we have partnered with AMC and the Bay Circuit Alliance to do work in Bradley Palmer as well as on the Mill River in Rowley.

Finally, if you haven't met Sarah Shadoff, our new Outreach Coordinator, please stop by the ECTA office and say hello!

As ever, we are grateful for your membership and support and we look forward to seeing you on the trails!!

Best wishes,

Susan Lawrence
Chair, Board of Directors



Trail Projects We Completed in 2015

In Essex County we're lucky to have 450 miles of scenic trails where people can enjoy many outdoor activities anytime. Each year we budget and prioritize which trails need repairs. Here is a summary of projects completed that improved the trail experience for our community.

1. Bay Circuit Trail/Founders Trail at Bradley Palmer In May, ECTA hosted a volunteer work day at Bradley Palmer with Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) and Bay Circuit Alliance (BCA). Repairs were done on the Founder's Trail to Moon Hill including: fixing water bars, cutting back the trail, and resurfacing the washed out sections.

2. Bull Brook in Ipswich ECTA assisted by permitting the project under our Townwide Trail Management Plan.

3. Mill River Trail and Crossing in Georgetown-Rowley State Forest We are working with AMC, BCA, DCR and the Town of Rowley to improve the parking area and the trail access to the water crossing. Plans also include installing a boardwalk and beaver deceiver. Permitting is underway and construction is slated for early November.

4. Kiosks We constructed and installed five kiosks with the assistance of an Eagle Scout,

Baxter Demers (Thank you for your help!) Three are in Bradley Palmer, one is in Willowdale State Forest, and one is at Prospect Hill.

5. Discover Hamilton Trail/Blackbrook Trail With the generous support of ECTA members, neighbors, and a grant from the Fields Pond Foundation, we repaired five water crossings, mowed and cut back the section from Cutler Road to the causeway at Pingree Reservation, added pack to a 300' stretch, and installed a new beaver deceiver.

6. Riverbend Bridges in West Newbury We permitted and built four moveable bridges, one of which is horse compatible.

7. Willowdale State Forest Trail #44 We completed an emergency repair of a collapsed culvert along trail #44. We built a wooden crossing that is horse compatible and can be moved.

8. New Trail at NE Biolabs We collaborated with NE Biolabs to permit and build a new trail through the woods along the edge of the soccer field, which addressed both safety and maintenance concerns.

9. Bradley Palmer Trail Repair With a generous \$5,000 grant from the New England Biolabs Foundation, we repaired 1,000' of eroded trails using stone pack, crushed stone and water bars.

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Upcoming Events in 2016

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|--------|-------------------------------------|
| Apr 19 | Annual Meeting |
| Apr 30 | 21st Annual Equine Expo |
| TBD | Spring for the Trails Half Marathon |
| Jun 4 | 6th Annual ECTAthlon |
| Jun 18 | Summer Solstice Festival |
| Sep 17 | 12th Annual Run for the Trails |

Visit the ECTA website at 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 to connect with us. Become a fan of ECTA on Facebook to keep up to date with ECTA happenings and give us your feedback!

Contact ECTA

PO Box 358
Hamilton, MA 01936
978-468-1133

office@ectaonline.org www.ectaonline.org

The ECTA Events Bulletin (April - Oct 2015)

Equine EXPO celebrates its 20th anniversary This year was the 20th anniversary for the Equine EXPO, held at the Topsfield Fairgrounds. Over 700 people attended this fantastic event. A big thanks go out to all of the volunteers, sponsors and advertisers, without whom we could not hold this event. All Demos were greatly received- a special thanks to the Palomino Singers for all that fun! Many friendships were renewed and many many sales were made to make it a great day for all!

A Big Turnout for the Half-Marathon in Willowdale Forest On May 3rd, ECTA held our inaugural "Spring for the Trails" half-marathon (13.1 miles) at amazing Willowdale State Forest. 106 runners enjoyed the race which was part of the 2015 North Shore Trail Series sponsored by New England Running Co. In the Open Division (29-30) Colin Carroll won by finishing in 1:23:01 and Gabrielle Helfgott, the first female, finished in 1:39:01. The Masters Division (40+) was led by David Long with 1:30:06, and Joan Cullinane came in at 1:54:56.

Running, Biking, Riding and Kayaking in One Race Our 5th annual ECTAthlon was held on Saturday, June 6th and was a wild success! It kicked off in Bradley Palmer and ended on the Ipswich River at EBSCO. This race is truly a one of a kind. Out of 27 teams who participated, the Wild Woodsmen finished with the winning time of 2:15'12", followed by the Groton House Gang (2:22'38") and Lalobas Rancheros (2:26'06"). Our goal for next year is to attract 35 teams. If you are interested, contact the ECTA office and we can help pair you up.

Summer Solstice Party Raises over \$15,000 We like to have fun and so do our supporters. In June we hosted our second summer solstice party at the beautiful Groton House Farm (Thank you to the Winthrop Family!) Over 160 guests attended the event. Beer was donated by Ipswich Ale and rum punch by Turkey Shore Distilleries. The food was catered by American BBQ. A silent auction, and live country/folk music from the band, Labor in Vain, rounded out the evening. The event helped ECTA raise over \$15,000! It was a great evening for all.

Over 100 Usher in Fall with a Brisk Trail Run On September 19th, 113 runners joined ECTA for the 11th annual Run For the Trails at the Myopia Schooling Field. Participants could race in either a 5 or 10 mile distance. The overall winner for the men's 10-mile race was Justin Jones with a time of 1:06:34 and the women's 10-mile leader was Simonetta Piergentili coming in at 1:13:53. 5-mile race winners were Doug DeAngelis (31:22) and Hanna Wagner (37:59).

Bikers Get a Guided Tour On September 20th, ECTA friend, Joe Geller, gave a guided bike tour of the Rail Trail to 18 mountain bikers through Topsfield, Wenham and Danvers. The Rail Trail Bike Ride was part of the Trails & Sails event series sponsored by Essex National Heritage. Participants raved about the route and all enjoyed great scenery.

Know Thy Tree On September 27th 18 tree lovers joined us for the Ipswich River Tree Walk Board Members Joe Sandulli and Dan Mayer, led the group on a tree walk around the Ipswich River Watershed Association "Riverbend" campus and neighboring properties. Guests said they found the arboreal tidbits "eye opening and educational" and the scenery "just delightful".

Getting Down to Business Every spring, ECTA holds an annual member meeting where we review our annual budget, welcome new board members and hear from interesting guest speakers. This year the annual meeting was held at the Gould Barn, in Topsfield, on April 21st. Our guest speaker Jim MacDougall fascinated everyone with a talk about the trails, animals, plants and history of Willowdale State Forest. We also welcomed new board member Scott Bumpus, owner of Seaside Cycle in Manchester.



ECTA Counts On Us All

As the leaves fall and the days grow short, we can look back on a productive year caring for and expanding the trail system. With your help and generosity ECTA continues to carry out its mission to preserve and maintain.

Maintaining a trail network of 450 miles takes a lot of passion, time and resources. But it can only happen with generous donations from our members and friends. In the past two years we have raised over \$50,000 each year to pay for the much needed repair work that we do. I am asking you to help again this year by contributing as much as you can in support of our general fund.

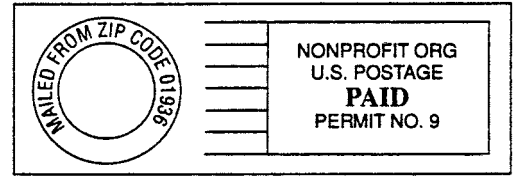
An appeal letter will be mailed shortly. In the meantime, we invite and welcome your special pledge in support of ECTA's important cause. Your generous contribution is vital.

With thanks in advance,

Ray Denis
Director of Development



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



Please mail your tax deductible gift to: ECTA, PO Box 358, Hamilton, MA 01936
Contributions can be made by credit card at www.ectaonline.org or by phone at 978-468-1133

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