



ESSEX COUNTY TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Preserve, Maintain, Respect

Fall 2016

View from the Chair

As I reflect on 2016 and prepare for the coming year, I can't help but be grateful for all that we have accomplished.

We began the summer with our Summer Solstice Party on a magical night under the tent at beautiful Groton House Farm courtesy of Ann Getchell and the Winthrop family. There was delicious barbecue from American Barbecue, a great silent auction including a bicycle donated by Board member Scott Bumpus of Seaside Cycle and dancing to the terrific tunes of Labor in Vain Band. We were even graced with a full moon! It was wonderful to see so many friends at the event and the positive energy was evident and invigorating.

We sponsored events for every type of trail user - cross country skiers, bikers, runners, hikers, equestrians and dog walkers. Our trails are well used! We have had many successful trail projects underway during the year and have raised funds to do even more next year. We are in the process of completing a survey of culverts and trail work in Willowdale for future repair work and we continue to accept trail easements. We are very excited to report that Arthur Finkelstein and Don Curiale have given ECTA a permanent trail easement on the trail along and down to the river in back of Waldingfield. MANY THANKS to Don and Arthur. Don and Arthur's easement inspired another person to consider an easement on a very important trail on their property as well. We'll be able to talk more about that later. For a small organization, we make a big impact!

Sarah and Carol, our management team, continue to do the lion's share of the work and do an excellent job. However, none of this would be possible without the wonderful landowners and partner organizations with whom we work and our members and supporters – you!! I am so thankful to each and every one of you.

See you out on the trails,

Susan

Susan Lawrence
Chair, Board of Directors

Townwide Trail Management Plans

We are excited to report that the Conservation Commissions in both Topsfield and West Newbury have extended our Townwide Trail Management Plans. This is exciting because these plans allow the ECTA to maintain trails in the wetlands and buffer zones without having to file a Notice of Intent with the State each time we have a project. The Management Plans were developed and implemented by the ECTA and they save us considerable time and money which in turn allows us to complete more projects each year. They strengthen our relationship with the Conservation Commissions as the renewal process is a collaborative effort where we work together to ensure the best Plan that works for everyone. They also strengthen our relationships with landowners and organizations as we can work with them to permit trail projects for which they otherwise would have to file. These Plans are exclusive to the ECTA.



View from the Summer Solstice Party at Groton House Farm

The Management Plans in our six towns are in place for 3 years. At the end of 3 years we review the projects that have been completed and revise the plans based on our experience. This year the regulations regarding culvert replacement have been changed by the State so we had to work with each town to revise how we maintain them. Both Commissions were wonderful to work with. They understood why these Plans were so important to our work and worked hard to revise them so we could accomplish our goals.

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Upcoming 2017 Events

Apr 18	Annual Meeting
Apr 29	22nd Annual Equine Expo
May 13	Spring for the Trails Half Marathon
Jun 3	7th Annual ECTAthlon
Jun 17	Summer Solstice Party
Sep 16	13th 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!

ECTA Ventures into Virtual Trail Races

This summer, ECTA added to its popular trail races (Run for the Trails and the Spring for the Trails Half Marathon) by offering a “virtual trail series.” ECTA Board member Eric Krathwohl set up 3 virtual trail races on the mapping app, Strava, as a so-called “segment.” Runners could “track” their runs over the designated “segment,” by any mapping app (e.g. Map-MyRun, RunKeeper, Garmin, Nike+, etc.) and upload their “tracks” to Strava, which automatically ranks all uploaded runs. The three trails spanned Essex County from a 2.3-mile segment in the well-traveled Appleton Farms tracks and trails, a 3.7-mile course in Willowdale State Forest and finally a hilly 3.2-mile trail along the Merrimac River in West Newbury. Each of the courses featured something unique. For example, in Appleton, the course passed three obelisks salvaged from the old Harvard College Library that was demolished long ago. This virtual series, like other “virtual races,” allows runners to participate at their convenience. However, unlike those “virtual races,” here runners could do the race as many times as they wanted over a 4-month period and they would be guaranteed to run the exact same race and same topography as everyone else. Congratulations to Steve Whittey of Gloucester as the top runner!! ECTA is hoping to build on this start and to increase participation in 2017.



The ECTA Events Highlights (April - Oct 2016)

21st Annual Equine Expo It was a very successful year with a large attendance and more vendors than ever at the Topsfield Fairgrounds on April 30th! The ECTA tables were overflowing with donated goods from members and others who wanted to help support the organization. Our demonstrators were well received and the silent auction had a good selection of items to bid on donated by many members and businesses. It was a great day for everyone to buy what they needed and to catch up with old friends. The Committee would like to thank all those who donated, helped before and during the sale, helped pack up at the end as well as everyone who attended.

2nd Annual Spring for the Trails Half Marathon On Saturday, May 14th, ECTA hosted our second half-marathon (13.1 miles) on some of the beautiful trails in Willowdale State Forest. We had a spectacular turnout, with 148 runners enjoying the race which was a part of the 2016 North Shore Trail Series sponsored by New England Running Co. That's an almost 40% participant increase from last year! In 1st place was Michael Ambrose with a finishing time of 1:26:32 and Isabella Donadio, the first female, finished in 1:38:10.

6th Annual ECTAthlon 24 teams competed this year in ECTA's unique four-part relay of running, biking, riding and kayaking. Held on National Trails Day (Saturday, June 4th), we were able to celebrate the wonderful variety of trail users in our community. First place went to the Wild Woodsmen with a winning time of 2:25:37, followed by the STARchitects (2:27:05) and Ipswich River Go with the Flow (2:31:33). It's never too early to start planning your team for next June. Join us out on the trails!

Summer Solstice Party Our annual fund raising party held in June at Groton House Farm enjoyed perfect weather for all who attended. The silent auction offered bidders both modest and big ticket items - from an epicurean gift basket from The Cellar Door to a Trek Mountain bike from Seaside Cycle to \$5,000 worth of tree service from Mayer Tree. Thanks to active bidding, we raised over \$12,000. American BBQ once again catered the dinner - much to the delight of our guests. We couldn't do it without the support of sponsors and gift donors so a big thank you to all!

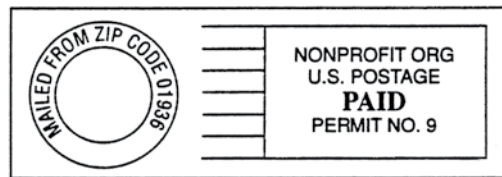
12th Annual Run for the Trails On the beautiful morning of September 17th, ECTA held our 12th Annual 5 and 10 mile race over public and private trails in Hamilton. We had a healthy turnout, with 112 runners participating. John Ayers was the overall winner in the 5 mile race with a time of 31:35, and Greg Krathwohl was the winner in the 10 mile race with a time of 59:54. Check out ectaonline.org for the full race results and a list of the male and female winners by division! As one runner said, “What a great race! It is wonderful to be able to run on all of these beautiful trails on the Northshore.” We are truly blessed.



Photos (clockwise) Equine Expo, Summer Solstice Party, Spring for the Trails



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