



# ESSEX COUNTY TRAIL ASSOCIATION

**Preserve, Maintain, Respect**

**Fall 2018**

## A View from the Chair

Dear Friends,

Welcome, Fall! Change is in the air, with brisk temperatures and the blazing colors of autumn—I love this time of year! The trails are beautiful and waiting for you—be sure to take time from your hectic schedules to energize with the crisp air and crunch of leaves on the trails.

Change is also happening at ECTA with the departure of two treasured board members, Liz Wheaton and Susie Banta. Their service has been a gift for which we are deeply thankful—they will be missed. We also welcome new board member Martha Sanders, who is stepping up to serve our mission to maintain and promote the responsible use of the land and trails.

Exciting news! We are adding a new event this fall called “Thanks for the Trails 5K and Kids Fun Run” on the day after Thanksgiving at Patton Park in South Hamilton. It builds on the local tradition of Gabe’s Run, to which a portion of the proceeds will be donated. Seek a personal record, camaraderie with friends, or a healthy family outing? Put it on your calendar—this event is for you!

Finally, *Help Wanted*—Volunteers to lend a hand with trail projects and repair are urgently needed. It’s no secret we were hit hard with storm damage this past year, with wind/snow/rain storms challenging us to keep the trails open. Thanks to our stalwart volunteers, we kept them open, but the load was hard to handle due to the extent of damage. You are invited to join this hearty group and help maintain open trails—you will be warmly welcomed. Whether you are a runner, equestrian, cyclist, cross country skier or enjoy walking in the woods, these precious trails are maintained for you! Please join the ECTA team as a member! Renew today!

Time to go crunch some leaves underfoot!

See you on the trails,

Susan Lawrence  
Chair, Board of Directors



## New Wenham Boardwalk

**by Carol Lloyd, Director of Trail Management**

We recently completed a project in Wenham that we are pretty excited about. It is located on Walnut Road right across from Ledyard Farm.

The ECTA has a trail easement on the Ellis property starting on Walnut Road and going up the hill to the backside of Myopia. In the middle of the trail is a boardwalk over a very wet area. Over time, the boardwalk became less stable and very slippery. As a result, trail users began going through the field to avoid the boardwalk, this then became the main trail. On top of this, the trail through the woods became impassable due to trees falling in storms and the brush overgrowing the trail. It hasn’t been used in maybe 10 years. The Ellis family recently decided to subdivide the field and asked the ECTA to repair the old trail and boardwalk and move the trail back to the original location. That’s exactly what we did and had a lot of community support to get it done.

The ECTA had to permit the project, construct a new boardwalk, clear the trail and post the trail to notify trail users of the new location. We worked with the Wenham Conservation Commission to permit the project under our Townwide Trail Management Plan. We also had help from Weatherall Design who designed and managed construction of the boardwalk along with wonderful volunteers who came and helped in all kinds of weather over the course of several months. Tasks Unlimited did the trail clearing and helped post the trail.

The money for this project was raised from the Ellis Family, the Institution for Savings, and by the fantastic support of our members and donors. A special thank you to the landowners, the Ellis Family, for making this project possible! The trail is back where it was originally and better than ever!

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## Contact ECTA

P.O. Box 358  
Hamilton, MA 01936  
978-468-1133

office@ectaonline.org    www.ectaonline.org



# To ECTA, a heartfelt Thank You

by Susie Banta, former ECTA Director

It is hard to believe that ECTA has been part of my life for 18 years! As a board member for many of those years, I have watched the ECTA family grow and change, even though its mission has remained steady and clear: to maintain and protect the wonderful trail system that runs through six towns -Hamilton, Wenham, Ipswich, Topsfield, Essex and West Newbury—of Essex County.

This is a gritty and determined organization. Like those who put on their riding boots, their cycling, running or hiking shoes or man their paddles in all the variations of our New England weather to hit the trails, ECTA is there picking up, opening up, protecting and preserving through major storms, the press of civilization, economic down turns, and the constant activity of those wonderful but pesky beavers who are determined to turn trails into submerged paths.

It is an organization of hard working volunteers and a couple of AMAZING staff that has an impact far beyond its numbers. AND, its efforts are felt and enjoyed by so many who aren't always aware of its work. As I move out of the area and reluctantly give up my place on the board, this is what keeps coming to my mind, as it has for many years, that the impact on the lives of those who live in our towns in Essex County, goes so far beyond "trail maintenance," a vision which doesn't always create an urgent call to arms or financial support at the top of people's giving list. Yet, here is the thing, if you live in our towns, if you play here on occasion, if you only walk on the paved roads in Bradley Palmer, get lost on foot, bike, or horse on the not paved trails in Willowdale, or even just enjoy living and visiting an area that is defined by open spaces, even some wild places, with the knowledge that these places are available to enjoy, **then ECTA is important to what is important to you.** Along with Essex County GreenBelt and the Ipswich River Watershed Association, we are the stewards of this amazing place where we live, work and play. My thanks as I ride out of town to everyone who supports, in any form, this wonderful organization. Happy trails!



*The wonderful Susie Banta*

*Photos (left to right):  
Adorable Donkey at Jamboree;  
Patrick Keough Memorial Ride (credit Shawn Tinkham Photography);  
New Boardwalk in Wenham*





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

*Many thanks to the whole ECTA Team! Directors, Staff, Advisors, Trail Stewards, Landowners, Volunteers, Donors and Members!*



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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please include my new or renewal membership in this contribution at the level checked below:

☐ \$35 Individual   ☐ \$50 Family   ☐ \$100 Friend   ☐ \$250 Patron   ☐ \$500 Steward   ☐ \$1,000 Trustee

I would like to include an additional contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for:

☐ General Fund   ☐ Myopia Schooling Field Fund   ☐ In Memory/In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_