



ESSEX COUNTY TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Preserve, Maintain, Respect

Spring 2018

A View from the Chair

Dear Friends,

At long last our extended winter seems to be waning and signs of spring are in the air. What a winter!! From the devastating cold and winds of December to the four Nor'easters in March that left us with downed trees and power lines, days of no power and plenty of snow, it was quite a winter. We're all anxious to put it behind us and get out on the trails.

Speaking of the trails ... because of all the wind and heavy snow, there will be more than enough work to be done. We will be looking to all of you to help us to identify trails that have trees down or need other work. Please let us know by calling the office or sending us a message. We will do our best to get to those problems in addition to our normal trail work and mowing.

There are a few events that I'd like to point out and hope that you will add them to your calendars. First, we will be having a ride in memory of Patrick Keough on June 2 ... more details inside. Second, instead of an evening party we will be having an afternoon event called "ECTA Trail Jamboree" which will include guided runs, bicycle rides, an equestrian event, games, donkey races, music and delicious food. The date is June 23 and it will be held at Groton House Farm. Please come! Last, we are adding another run to our event list. This one will be held the day after Thanksgiving and will be called "Thanks for the Trails."

This should be enough to keep us busy for the next few months! As always, we are very grateful to each of you for your support.

See you on the trails,

Susan Lawrence
Chair, Board of Directors



Trail Safety and Respect

by Leah Angelini, ECTA Intern

As the weather gets warmer, the days get longer, and the trees start to bloom, everyone will want to soak up as much sun as possible. Whether you will be hitting the trails on your bicycle, driving down the street with your top down, or riding your horse off property, everyone has one goal in common – relax and enjoy everything nature has to offer. Therefore, it is important that we, as a community, have a mutual understanding of trail safety and give one another respect so they, too, can feel safe on the road and trails. We would like to remind everyone ...

Safety

Dress in appropriate clothing that will allow other road and trail users to see you easily both during the day and at night. Communicate to other trail and road users when you are approaching so you do not take anyone by surprise. Be cautious of the trail and road conditions. Be extra careful on particularly winding, narrow roads. In order to preserve the integrity of the trails, avoid the wet, muddy, slippery trails that could leave tracks and impair the ground conditions. Please stay on the established trails to avoid disturbing the surrounding wildlife.

Respect

We want all runners, riders, hikers and cyclists to feel safe and comfortable using the roads and trails. Be courteous of one another. For motorists on the roads, remember to slow down and pass at an appropriate distance for runners, riders, and cyclists. A common rule of thumb is to pass at 25 mph or less while giving the road user the maximum amount of room when passing. On the trails, these rules apply as well. Every user on the trail is a fellow nature lover and should be given the equal opportunity to use the trails as they wish to. To prevent equine-related accidents, cyclists and runners should inform equestrians when they are approaching to avoid spooking the horse. Please abide by any posted leash laws for specific trails as well. They are there to protect the safety of both your dog and other trail users. Remember to communicate, give one another space when passing, and a smile or wave to thank them for sharing the trail with you.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported our trail network and made this community a better place. We couldn't have done it without you!

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Contact ECTA

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Upcoming 2018 Events

Apr 17	Annual Meeting
Apr 28	23rd Annual Equine Expo
TBD	Birding Walk
May 5	4th Annual Spring for the Trails Half Marathon
Jun 2	Ride in Memory of Patrick Keough
Jun 23	ECTA Trail Jamboree
TBD	Tree and Plant Walk
Sep 15	14th Annual Run for the Trails
TBD	Fungi Walk
Nov 23	Thanks for the Trails 5k

Visit the ECTA website at www.ectaonline.org for details of these events 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 and Instagram to keep up to date with ECTA happenings and give us your feedback!

New events coming in 2018

Ride in Memory of Patrick Keough *June 2, 2018*

The countryside lost a great friend in September 2016 when Patrick Keough passed away unexpectedly. Whether he was hunting or just out for a ride, Patrick loved to be out on the trails. An anonymous friend of ECTA has pledged \$10,000 to start a trail fund in Patrick's memory. We are so touched and will hold a ride on June 2 to honor this generous gift. There will be no charge for the ride, but the hope is that riders will make some gift, however large or small, in Patrick's memory. Details for the ride will follow. Please join us!

ECTA Trail Jamboree *June 23, 2018*

Come Walk, Run, Bike and Ride on guided trail adventures (for all levels) followed by a party featuring live music, live animals, games, great food trucks and local beer from the Tapmobiles of Ipswich Ale Brewery. Join us at Groton House Farm in Hamilton on Saturday, June 23rd with trail activities from 1-3pm and party from 3-6pm. Get outdoors and have fun while supporting ECTA and the 450 miles of trails that we maintain for your access to walk, run, cycle and ride!

Thanks for the Trails 5k *November 23, 2018*

ECTA is holding its inaugural Thanks for the Trails 5k and Kids Fun Run the day after Thanksgiving at Patton Park in Hamilton (November 23, 2018). Using a scenic and challenging course and offering great prizes, this will be an event for all! In addition to cash (or gift certificates) for top finishers, and many other terrific prizes, there will be cash prizes for the teams (co-ed) with the most runners and that have the best score (on a traditional XC scoring basis). We are building on the fine tradition enjoyed by so many for the last 10 years with Gabe's Run, and a portion of the proceeds will be donated to Gabe's Fund. Whether you seek a personal record or camaraderie with old friends and rivals, this event is for you!

Wishlist

ECTA is currently looking for the following:

- New or Used Gator
- New or Gently Used Chainsaw
- Volunteer Grant Writer

Please contact Sarah at office@ectaonline.org for further information.



Trail Project Highlights in 2017

by Carol Lloyd, Director of Trail Management

We thought we would show you some of the things we were up to in 2017 ...

Yellow House Field, Hamilton

The ECTA holds a trail easement on this trail at Yellow House Field in Hamilton off of Bridge Street. This trail got very wet in the spring and became impassable. In order to make it a year-round trail we had R.P. Scanlon Landscaping do some improvements. They dug out 6 inches of mud, put down geotechnic fabric and added 3/4" pack on top of that. The fabric will keep the pack from disappearing and the trail should be great 12 months out of the year. *Photos top left.*

Trail 44, Willowdale State Forest

This water crossing had a failed 24" culvert and sink holes were beginning to form over it making it a safety hazard. Our temporary fix was a wooden boardwalk, but the banks of the stream started to erode and that, too, became unsafe. New regulations required that we replace the 2' culvert with a 5' culvert. This type of work on a trail was unprecedented. With the help of funding from the DCR's Recreational Trails Grant, New England Biolabs Foundation, and Peter Britton, we were able to design, permit, and install a state of the art solution. The work was done by T.W. Excavating. *Photos top right.*

Trail 3 - 4, Willowdale State Forest

Trail 3 - 4 has been in bad shape for years. Park officials threatened to close it 4 years ago because they didn't have the resources to fix it. This then became our priority as our philosophy is to preserve trails when we can so that we don't lose them. The problems were that it was overgrown, wet and eroding. The brush was overgrown and difficult for passage on horseback. The water ran over the trail in three places making it difficult for passage on foot most of the year. In order to repair this trail, we had to include three 12" culverts so that the water could flow through them rather than over the trail, repair the surface and cut the brush back. We were allowed to use small pipes here because the trail is a manmade causeway. Our experts at the Department of Environmental Restoration and IRWA said that three 12" pipes would improve the hydrology of the area, so they were approved by conservation. This work was also done by T.W. Excavating with funding from the DCR's Recreational Trails Grant. **Photos bottom right.**



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* List as of December 31, 2017
 Our apologies for any omissions



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Topsfield Linear Common Rail Trail



Willowdale State Forest
Photos by Jane Rumrill



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