



# ESSEX COUNTY TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Helping People Enjoy the Great Outdoors

Spring 2016

## A View from the Chair

Dear Friends,

The Essex County Trail Association was founded in 1982 with the belief that the ability to get outside into the woods refreshes the body, the mind and the spirit. It is well documented that being outside in nature is good for one's well-being. Thus, for the last 34 years, ECTA has been creating, clearing and rehabbing trails to allow access to the countryside for the many ways we all enjoy it. Three decades later, we maintain more than 450 miles of trails on public and private land in Essex County.

None of this would be possible, however, if not for the generosity of *landowners*. We must, at all times, be guided by their wishes and grateful for the opportunity to be on their land. Although ECTA does hold easements on many trails, it does not own any property. We are simply stewards of the land and we are indebted to all who make it possible for us to do this work... *landowners, members, friends and volunteers*. THANK YOU!!!

ECTA's Annual Meeting will be held on April 19 at the Gould Barn in Topsfield ... please come!

Several events are scheduled for the spring and summer as well. Our second annual Spring for the Trails Half-Marathon will be held on May 14. The annual ECTAthlon – run, bike, horseback ride and kayak relay event – will be held on June 4 this year and our Summer Solstice party will be at Groton House Farm again this year on June 18. And, mark your calendar for the annual Equine Expo on April 30.

All of us at ECTA are looking forward to a great 2016!! We look forward to seeing you at events and outside enjoying the trails!

Best wishes,

*Susan*

Susan Lawrence  
Chairwoman, Board of Directors



*New boardwalk at Mill River; Rowley*

## Mill River Project in Rowley

by Carol Lloyd, Director of Trail Management

The Bay Circuit Alliance and AMC, in collaboration with ECTA, REI, and NEMBA, just completed a very exciting project on the Bay Circuit trail in the Georgetown Rowley State Forest where it crosses the Mill River. It was our first time working with such a large group of organizations and the end product is really great!

This crossing had been on everyone's mind for a very long time. It is part of the Bay Circuit trail and had been a problem because the water had gotten higher due to beaver activity and the old boardwalk had become rotten and couldn't be used. It was very difficult to cross. The Bay Circuit Alliance tried to solve this problem about 15 years ago but had to give up on it because the cost to design a boardwalk was \$100,000+ and they couldn't get approval from DCR or the Town of Rowley.

The project came up again a year or so ago when the BCA and AMC merged. These groups are excellent at what they do but didn't have the local expertise. They asked the ECTA for help. We agreed to help them on a consulting basis. Our job was to find the people to do the work, come up with a design that everyone agreed was best, get DCR's approval and then get the project permitted. BCA and AMC were to raise the money, recruit volunteers, and coordinate the interest among the groups.

The first thing we did was to go to Richard Scott at DCR. Richard said the problem there was not just the crossing. In order to get his support a parking area would have to be put in, access

*New stairs at Mill River (below)*



*Continued on Page 5*

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(Sponsors as of March 11, 2016)

## Upcoming Events

Apr 9	Rail Trail Bike Ride
Apr 19	Annual Meeting
Apr 30	21st Annual Equine Expo
May 14	2nd Annual Spring for the Trails Half Marathon
Jun 4	6th Annual ECTAthlon
Jun 18	Summer Solstice Party
Sep 17	12th Annual Run for the Trails

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!

## Contact ECTA

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978-468-1133

[office@ectaonline.org](mailto:office@ectaonline.org)    [www.ectaonline.org](http://www.ectaonline.org)



# Pikes Bridge Road Repair

by Deb Hamilton, ECTA Director, West Newbury

Pikes Bridge Road in West Newbury, also known as “Warbler Alley,” has been the destination of generations of birders, nature lovers, riders and bicyclists. This half-mile long track connects Turkey Hill Road with Garden Street and crosses Kelly Brook, where it spreads out to become the headwaters of the Upper Artichoke Reservoir. It connects across the Atherton parcel of Greenbelt land out to Indian Hill Street, and then to the rest of the wonderful West Newbury trail network. The road was closed but not abandoned by the town decades ago and by 2015 the old roadway was a rutted, muddy mess with tractor-eroded puddles that became deeper and deeper every year.

The Omasta family – Gary, Jennifer, daughter Lauren and son Coltin – who built their home, barn and pastures on Turkey Hill Road in 2005, had been enjoying riding their horses on the old road, in spite of its deteriorated condition. As ECTA’s Trail Steward in that corner of West Newbury, Coltin recognized the importance of this link for riders on both sides of the Artichoke. He made it his mission to take the steps necessary to repair this important trail and keep it open and usable for everyone.

Coltin, a talented equestrian who excels at “cowboy western shooting,” is also a Life Scout in West Newbury Boy Scout Troop 26 and was looking for a community service project to earn his Eagle Scout badge. He brought his plan for improving the old roadway to the West Newbury Conservation Commission, the DPW and the Selectmen, and the Essex County Trail Association. Not only did they approve the project, but it was approved by the Boy Scout Council in October as well. The plan included reopening one end of the road so that fill material could be delivered, filling and regrading about 1000’ of rutted road to Pikes Bridge, and widening the narrow single-track to better accommodate horses by clearing overhanging brush and branches to at least 6’ wide from one end of the road to the other.

With help from the West Newbury community, members of Troop 26, former Scouts, and Gary Omasta’s bucket loader, the 88 yards of gravel were delivered and spread. The project was completed over two weekends in December before the ground froze. ECTA funded the purchase of the four truck loads of material that was used, and Bentley Warren Company donated the delivery of the gravel. Cummings Properties in Beverly provided one source for the funding needed, and the West Newbury Riding and Driving Club also contributed toward trail work in West Newbury.

Now, thanks to Coltin’s resourcefulness and determination, “Warbler Alley” can again welcome folks from near and far, with binoculars and bicycles, whether walkers or riders, who can enjoy the beautiful views from Pikes Bridge, add to their birding life lists, and traverse the trail without fear of floundering in impassable ruts. Thank you, Coltin!!





## 2015 Grants Put To Good Use

In 2015, ECTA was awarded three substantial grants to help protect and maintain the trails we love in Essex County.

### Fields Pond Foundation, Inc.

The Fields Pond Foundation gave ECTA a generous grant of \$7,400 to go toward much needed maintenance along the Discover Hamilton and Blackbrook trails. Along with the generous support of ECTA members and neighbors, 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 ft. stretch, and installed a new beaver deceiver. The before and after photos are incredible!



*Blackbrook Trail before repairs, Winter 2015 (above)*



*Blackbrook Trail after repairs, Summer 2015 (above)*

### New England Biolabs Foundation

With a marvelous \$5,000 grant from the New England Biolabs Foundation, ECTA completed a Bradley Palmer trail repair project. By repairing approximately 1,000 feet of eroded trails using stone pack, crushed stone and water bars, we were able to improve the experience of the Bay Circuit Trail and Discover Hamilton Trail for trail users.



*Finished Bradley Palmer trail repair project, Summer 2015*



### MA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation

We are thrilled to report that ECTA has received a Recreational Trails Grant from DCR in the amount of \$39,880. We will be working on trail repairs at the Willowdale State Forest and Bradley Palmer State Park.

## Waldingfield Farm River Trail Repair

The ECTA has recently received permission from the Ipswich Conservation Commission to repair the trail at Waldingfield Farm that crosses the Ipswich River. The work will be done in accordance with the Townwide Trail Management Plan.

Waldingfield Farm is located at 55 Waldingfield Road. The trail to be repaired is located at the far corner of the Julia Bird Reservation, the polo field, and is the safest river crossing in the area for equestrians. Trail erosion has made portions of the trails unsafe. Our proposal corrects the damage and minimizes the risk of future damage. It ensures this important link continues to be open to all equestrians and pedestrians alike.

Specifically, we propose several measures to reduce erosion and improve trail conditions. These measures include the use of water bars, fabric/pack/gravel in the mud area, a rip rap check dam, and split rail fencing to mitigate the negative impact of weather and foot traffic and encourage natural surface restoration in two gullies. Work will begin this spring.

## Goals of ECTA

- To maintain and promote the responsible use of the land and trails
- To promote good will and serve as liaison between the trail users and landowners
- To provide organized support for the preservation of open land

*Thank a landowner today.  
They make it possible.*



## Mill River, Cont. from Pg. 1

down the hill, a beaver deceiver, as well as the boardwalk. He said access was the most important piece as it was incredibly dangerous. And it was – very steep, rocks, roots and deep gullies. Almost impassable. So what started out as a simple boardwalk quickly became a big project. It was also determined at this point that the trail was too dangerous for equestrians at this crossing so the boardwalk would be designed for pedestrians and mountain bikes.

We quickly called in the best of the best! Bob Weatherall provided the boardwalk design and construction, AMC designed the steps down the hill accessing the crossing and Bob Weatherall built them, Skip Lisle did the beaver deceiver, Arthur Page did the parking area, and Mike DeRosa did the permitting. We were able to get our designs approved by DCR and the Town of Rowley all for under \$30,000!

This project was fun because so many people wanted it to happen. It was fun because everyone did their part and they did it well. And the final product is just beautiful.



*New parking lot on Boxford Road  
(above)*

## Upcoming Events You Will Not Want To Miss!!

Here are two ECTA events that you do NOT want to miss! Check out our events calendar on Page 2 or [ectaonline.org](http://ectaonline.org) for the complete list.

### 21st Annual Equine EXPO/Paraphernalia Sale

Come to the Topsfield Fairgrounds on Saturday, April 30th, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. to buy or sell anything related to the horse and rider! There will be a silent auction as well as a demonstration ring inside the building running all day featuring Ben Wallace (training and mounting), Karen Pichke (Reiki for the horse and rider), Dana Stillwell (breed demo), NEER North (rescue horses), and Christine Taylor (Body Kneads massage). Admission is \$5. For more information on sponsorships and donations, please contact Kay at 978-768-6275 or [kljoreo@aol.com](mailto:kljoreo@aol.com). Donations of items (tack, riding apparel, stable equipment, books, artwork, etc.) for the ECTA tables are still being accepted. *Equine EXPO 2015 photo (top on right) by Sue McLaughlin*

### 6th Annual ECTAthlon

This amazing relay competition is back for a sixth year! Support ECTA by joining us on Saturday, June 4th, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. This relay consists of running, mountain biking, horseback riding and kayaking! Get your team together now! Check out our website for registration information. *ECTAthlon 2015 photos (right) by Thom Adorney*



## 2015 Contributors

Dear ECTA Members and Supporters,

We acknowledge below the many donors and sponsors who have given beyond individual and family memberships in support of ECTA. Their generosity makes it possible to fulfill our mission. Our heartfelt thanks to all.

Sincerely,

Raymond J. Denis  
Director of Development

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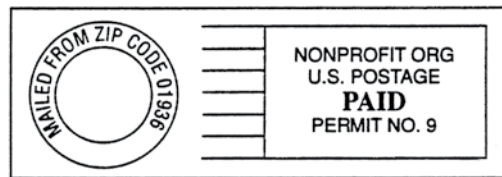
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Our apologies for any omissions*





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



*Steps at Mill River, Rowley*



*The Palomino Cowgirls,  
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*ECTAthlon 2015 Biking,  
T. Adorney photo*



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