



ESSEX COUNTY TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Preserve, Maintain, Respect

Vol. 31 No. 2 Summer 2013

A View from the Chair

As I write this, I am heading off on my annual vacation. Just before I left, I received a phone call that was a great way to end the week and send off. The call was from a landowner who wanted to discuss how best to permanently protect the trails and access to his property. This landowner has wonderful trails on his own property, but also recognized that he has benefitted from access to the many public and private trails in our community. He felt strongly that it was his time to give back and he was concerned that if he does not protect them now, when he eventually sells his property they may be closed by the new landowner and lost forever.

I share this story with you for several reasons, but mainly to make the point that we are fortunate to have access to a wonderful trail system that we all enjoy and we are even more fortunate to have landowners that unselfishly share their properties with us. This call was also important to me because it reminded me of the discussions that have recently surrounded the sale of Aquila Farm in Hamilton.

Aquila Farm includes trails that have been informally open to trail users for many years and are vital links in the Hamilton trail network. Unfortunately, these trails were not protected prior to the property being put up for sale. There have been many discussions concerning who the eventual owner will be and what their intentions are for the trail system. The town of Hamilton had the option to purchase the property but voted against it at a special town meeting. As part of that process, ECTA's role in the community and the trail system was misconstrued and misrepresented. I would like to now take the opportunity with all of you to clarify our position. First, let's

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ECTAthlon runners start off the race at DCR's Bradley Palmer State Park

Competition Heats Up at 3rd Annual ECTAthlon

Despite the unusually hot and humid conditions for early June, 27 teams battled for glory in the 3rd Annual ECTAthlon!

This truly unique event brings together competitors from four trail user groups (runners, mountain bikers, equestrians and paddlers) together in a team relay challenge. The race begins with a 3.5-mile run through Bradley Palmer State Park. Cheered on by spectators and teammates, runners finished their leg of the race first by handing off a team wristband to their mountain biker. Bikers then rode a 3.8-mile course over some of the same trails in Bradley Palmer, but finished at Black Oak Farm where they were met by their equestrian teammate.

Riders (alone or with a companion rider) were challenged to complete their 4-mile ride, on private bridle trails, in an optimum time of 24 minutes...too slow and the clock

kept running, too fast and they were penalized for any time under.

Finally, paddlers got the hand-off from their equestrian counterparts and then ran over the Winthrop Street bridge to the kayak launch area where they set off down the Ipswich River on the final leg of the race. Any teammate could meet the paddler at the Peatfield Street landing and run the last few blocks to the finish line at EBSCO Publishing in downtown Ipswich.

Several of our competitors completed more than one leg of the race! The "Half-Ironmen" included Michael Fraysse of Derry, NH who ran and rode, and Ryan Storey of Salem NH, who biked and paddled. Jeff Hubbard of Hamilton ran, biked, and paddleboarded with help from "J-Team" teammate Jen Sanford on the equestrian leg.

Prizes were awarded to the top three finishing teams, who

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2013 Massachusetts Trails Conference

ECTA was invited to participate in the 2013 Massachusetts Trails Conference held on May 4th in Devens, MA. Keynote speaker Mark Fenton, Transportation and Health Planner, opened the conference with his talk on "Creating Healthy Communities with Stickier Designs."

Mark stressed the importance of "incidental physical activity," such as biking or walking to school or work, as a way to incorporate exercise and outdoor recreation into our daily lives. This was best summed up by his story of meeting a man on a pedestrian bridge in Minneapolis who said he wasn't getting his recommended 30 minutes of daily exercise. Mark asked him where he was headed and he said "to my car." When they figured out how long the walk was, Mark pointed out to him that he was walking this route twice a day, for 15 minutes each way, and was, unintentionally, getting his 30 minutes of exercise. When asked why he parked in that location the man replied "because it's cheaper."

In order to encourage outdoor activity, Mark discussed the need to build communities with safe and accessible networks of trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes, with access to transit stops and a variety of destinations. He also pointed out that a high "walk score," whether it be based on sidewalks or trails, increases a home's value.

New England Mountain Bike Association's Philip Keyes presented

"Sustainable Trail Design, Construction & Maintenance" where he discussed successful techniques for managing water flow over side-slope trails, proper design of grade reversals, and gave tips for closing off and rerouting trails.

The focus was on trail easements at "Creating & Preserving Trail Corridors." Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts president Dan Gould, and members of the Greater Worcester and Franklin County Land Trusts, discussed their collaboration to protect an extensive network of trails for snowmobilers as well as year-round trail users.

Dick O'Brien & Pete Westover from Conservations Works, LLC helped us brush up on our volunteer trail work day procedures and provided us with an extensive safety checklist at the "Training & Working with Volunteer Trail Stewards" session.

"Local, Regional & State Trail Mapping Efforts" was covered in the last workshop of the day. Of particular interest was the Groton Trails Committee's presentation on the interactive GPS maps available on their website.

Thank you to the MA Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) and the MA Recreational Trails Advisory Board (MARTAB) for organizing this great event and for providing a wonderful opportunity to meet and share ideas with the many of the statewide organizations working to preserve our trails!

Upcoming Events

Aug 18	Explore Ipswich Horseback Ride
Sep 21	9th Annual Run for the Trails
Oct 26	Pan-Ipswich Challenge

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 ashley@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 Receives REI Grant for Work on Ipswich River Trails

The Riverbend campus of the Ipswich River Watershed Association is growing! The developers of Residences at Riverbend, a senior living facility off of County Road in Ipswich, are donating 5 acres of land to IRWA, which will expand their existing trail network.

In conjunction with the land transfer, IRWA is granting a trail easement to ECTA to ensure public access to the property. This easement will be the first in what ECTA hopes will be a series of trail easements connecting Riverbend to Appleton Farms and the Julia Bird Reservation on Waldingfield Road.

ECTA plans to make significant improvements to the existing trails at Riverbend, and to add new trails that will highlight some of the interesting features, such as the rockery and fish pond, that were part of the extensive turn-of-the-century landscaped gardens.

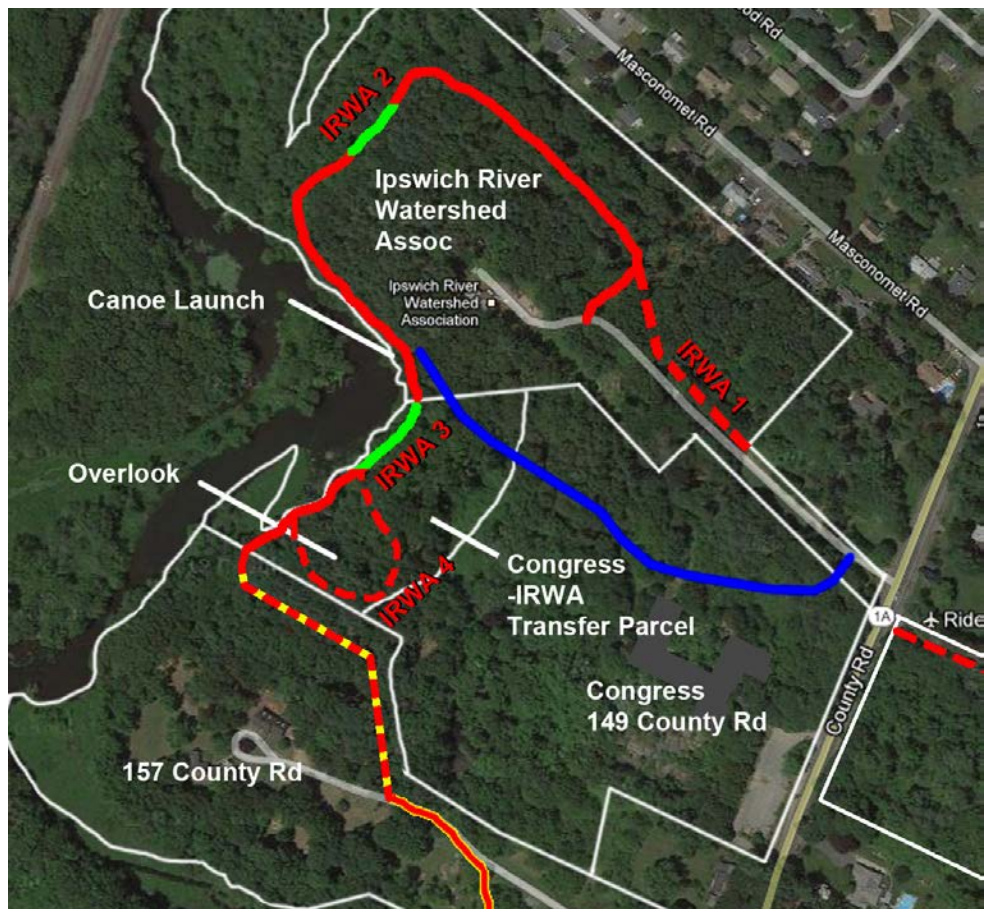
ECTA is also working with Essex County Greenbelt Association to expand the trail network across the road to the Greenbelt conservation property east of County Road.

Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) has generously awarded ECTA a \$10,000 grant to accomplish these repair and expansion projects. Thank you to REI for their continued support of our trail projects!

The trails at Riverbend are open to all trail users and provide direct access to a public canoe/ kayak launch.

We hope to start work this fall and will be planning a volunteer trail work day. Please look for more information on our website.

Photos top to bottom: Map of Riverbend Trails, Rockery Overlook, Canoe/ Kayak Launch, Dense Vegetation at Greenbelt Property



ECTA Trail Maps

Make sure to visit our website to see trail maps of all publicly accessible spaces in our areas. Printed trails maps available at:

Ipswich

River's Edge Gifts
Ipswich Bikes
Town Hall
Ipswich Visitor Center

Wenham

Wenham Sports Stop
ECTA Office

Beverly

Pinnacle Bikes
New England Running Co.

Topsfield

Gil's Grocery
Topsfield Bike Shop

West Newbury

GAR Library
West Newbury Food Mart

Hamilton

Green Meadows Farm

Reading

REI

The Truth About Trail Easements

The world around us is changing. Large tracts of open land are rapidly disappearing. Fear of liability lawsuits limits public access. The “handshake agreement” that has kept trails open for generations is no longer enough to protect our trails.

In the six towns in which we work, there are over 450 miles of trails, both public and private. But that is not what makes the trails in this area so special. What is impressive about that figure is the tremendous amount of interconnectivity within our trail network. At ECTA’s Pan-Ipswich Challenge, walkers and runners cross over 15 miles of continuous, publicly accessible trails. The Discover Hamilton 8-mile loop trail crosses through public properties as well as both protected and unprotected private lands. Examples of these extensive interconnected trails are many.

But what happens when one landowner in a trail network closes off a trail? In some cases, it means diverting to a busy road. In other cases the trail is completely cut off and suddenly your 8-mile loop becomes two dead-ends. While agreements and licenses offer some protection, generally these are revocable and/or limited to a particular duration of time. The only way to ensure continued public access is with a formal trail easement.

So what exactly is a trail easement?

“A trail easement is a perpetual legal agreement that allows others to use someone’s land in the manner provided for within the easement. An easement can be very broad, granting access to the easement holder and the public, or it can restrict what kind of access, when and under what conditions access can be used. For instance, the easement can be for public access to an entire property, or it could be restricted to certain users on a trail of a certain width. An easement can be for hiking only, bicycling, horseback riding; whatever uses the parties agree to, limited or expanded to the extent they decide.” (*Adapted from Creating Greenways: A Citizens Guide, May 2007*)

The trail easement is signed by the grantor (the landowner) and the grantee (the organization which holds the easement), notarized and recorded at the County Registry of Deeds. The trail corridor remains the property of the owner and can be transferred or sold but the trail easement is perpetual. Once a trail easement is recorded, it exists forever as part of the deed, even if the landowner sells the property.

That all sounds great for the trail users. But is there a benefit to the landowner?



A trail easement is an altruistic gift from a landowner. Unlike a conservation restriction, there is no tax benefit for an easement. A landowner who wishes to ensure public access across their trails is continuing a long tradition of public access in our area and is creating a legacy for future generations. “It’s about neighborliness. It’s about land ethic. It is sharing one’s enjoyment of beautiful undeveloped farms, meadows and forests with others.” (*Green Mountain Horse Association*)

Many of the publicly accessible properties in our area, including Bradley Palmer State Park, Appleton Farms and the Pingree Reservation, were private lands gifted to the state or local land trust organizations. While most of us can no longer afford such significant contributions of land, the gift of a trail easement can be just as profound. Even the shortest piece of trail across private property can be an essential link in the larger trail network.

In some cases, a group of landowners working together can provide a mutual benefit. Where a trail crosses through adjacent properties and connects to a larger network on either side, each landowner benefits from

an easement on the neighboring property.

What about the down sides to a trail easement?

There is absolutely no increase in liability to a landowner by granting a trail easement across their property. MGL Chapter 21, Section 17C limits a landowner’s vulnerability to law suits. While anyone, including a trail user, could sue a landowner, the owner’s liability is limited by law to circumstances of unlawful, wanton, and reckless conduct. In part, the law reads:

Any person having an interest in land . . . who lawfully permits the public to use such land for recreation, conservation, scientific, educational, environmental, ecological, research, religious, or charitable purposes without imposing a fee . . . shall not be liable for personal injuries or property damage sustained by such members of the public, including without limitation a minor, while on said land in the absence of willful, wanton, or reckless conduct by such person.

There are, however, a few serious issues to consider before granting a trail easement. In a sense, yes, the landowner is losing some of the privacy on their property. In most cases, trails can be located, designed, and maintained to provide continued privacy to private landowners. The landowner may even benefit from improvements to their property, such as trail resurfacing or bridge construction.

A trail easement does not prevent the landowner from future development or subdivision opportunities permitted for their property. The trail can be relocated within reason as needed, as long as it maintains the connectivity and characteristics of the original trail. The trail can also be closed for short-term circumstances such as private events, nearby construction or poor trail conditions. We make every effort to work with landowners to ensure that the experience of open trails is positive for all involved.

What can I do to help protect public access to our trail network?

If you are a trail user, the most important thing that you can do to

ensure public access is to RESPECT OUR LANDOWNERS. Whether the landowner is the Town, the State, a land trust or a private individual, it is essential to recognize that it is a privilege, not a right, to be granted access to trails. There are rules and regulations at almost all of the properties in our area –please adhere to this information as well as any posted signs for trail closures or limitations. If someone informs you that you are not permitted on the trail, please do as they ask.

If you have any questions or feel the information is not correct, call or email ECTA and we will look into your concerns. One negative experience for a landowner can prevent a possible easement or cause them to permanently close off a trail. “Courtesy costs nothing, the lack of it costs you a trail.”

If you are a landowner, we hope that you will consider the gift of a trail easement. Contact the ECTA office at 978-468-1133 or by email at office@ectaonline.org and we will set up a meeting to discuss the possibility of a trail easement on your property.

Trail Dedication in Memory of ECTA Friend Susan Foster

The trails at New England Biolabs were the setting of the ECTA Foster Crossing Trail and Bee Keeper’s Bench dedication on May 4, 2013, in memory of Susan F. Foster.

Over 150 people – Susan’s family, friends, and co-workers from New England Biolabs and New England Biolabs Foundation – enjoyed a spectacular spring day as they remembered Susan and enjoyed the open space that she loved so much. Groups of guests made their way from the main entrance in the parking area, through the meadow and up the trail. The view from the top of the trail was inspiring, especially once you reached the dedication site – the location of the beautiful granite bench created and installed by local artist Michael Updike.

Once the guests arrived, the gathering commenced with rider Julie DePaolis, on her horse Pierre,

trotting through the meadow and cantering up the hill in response to the fox hunting call, “end of the hunt, all in.” Brief tributes to Susan were shared and the dedication closed with vocalist Barbara Piper Green, singing, “You Raise Me Up.” At the very moment Barbara began singing, a majestic Red-tailed Hawk (who had been watching the ceremony from a distant treetop) decided to swoop down and circle the crowd repeatedly. It was a truly breathtaking experience.

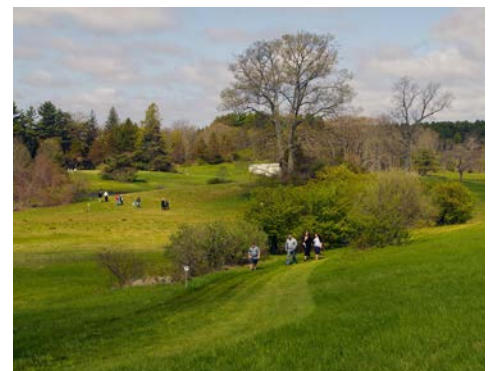
Following the dedication, guests proceeded to a Celebration of Life Reception, held at nearby Groton House Farm. Displays of Susan’s three passions: her horse, garden and beekeeping, were accompanied by harp music.

The Foster Crossing Trail & Bee Keeper’s Bench are examples of how a lost loved one can be remembered by friends and relatives for years to come with an extraordinary ECTA legacy. The Foster Crossing Trail has been sponsored by New England Biolabs Foundation.

Photo credits: John Fallon

What does the trail easement process entail?

- ECTA will set up an initial meeting to discuss the landowner’s goals, walk the trails and collect GPS data.
- The trail location and nearby property boundaries will be defined and mapped.
- ECTA and the landowner will customize the legal trail easement documents to meet the needs of both parties, and will agree on a maintenance plan for the trail.
- The landowner, if they choose, will have the legal document reviewed by an attorney.
- The document is then signed, notarized and recorded.



Grand Re-Opening of Discover Hamilton Trail

Thank you to everyone who joined us at the Discover Hamilton Trail Walk on Saturday, May 18th! The weather was beautiful, and 65 walkers of all ages met us at the start of the walk at the Myopia Schooling Field just behind Patton Park. Susanna Colloredo and John Hendrickson spoke briefly about the history of the 8-mile loop trail and ECTA's recent work to reroute portions of the trail off of roadways.

Walkers set off north through the Schooling field on the 1-mile trail connection leading to the trail loop which begins just after the railroad bridge on Cutler Road. (We lost a few walkers on Cutler Road and have since improved the trail markers in this area so the route is more visible!) After passing through the Appleton Farms Grass Rides property, walkers crossed over into the new portion of trail through "Collarbone Field," which reroutes the trail off of Cutler Road and Highland Street. Just days before the walk, the trail through Collarbone Field was under water. ECTA worked quickly to raise funds and install a beaver deceiver to lower the water level and clear the trail!

We enjoyed a brief water break at Black Oak Stables, and those who were out for a shorter walk took the shuttle from this 3-mile point back to the start. About 40 walkers continued on along the newly rerouted trail through Black Oak Farm and Bradley Palmer State Park

to our halfway point at the northern edge of the park. After a few more refreshments at the halfway stop, most of the remaining walkers kept on, heading south through the park, and continued over Highland Street through the Pingree Reservation back to Cutler Road and the Schooling Field. In total, about 25 people finished the entire 10-mile walk, including two third graders!

Thank you to the Town of Hamilton Parks & Recreation Department for sponsoring refreshments and Beauport Ambulance Service for providing the shuttle.

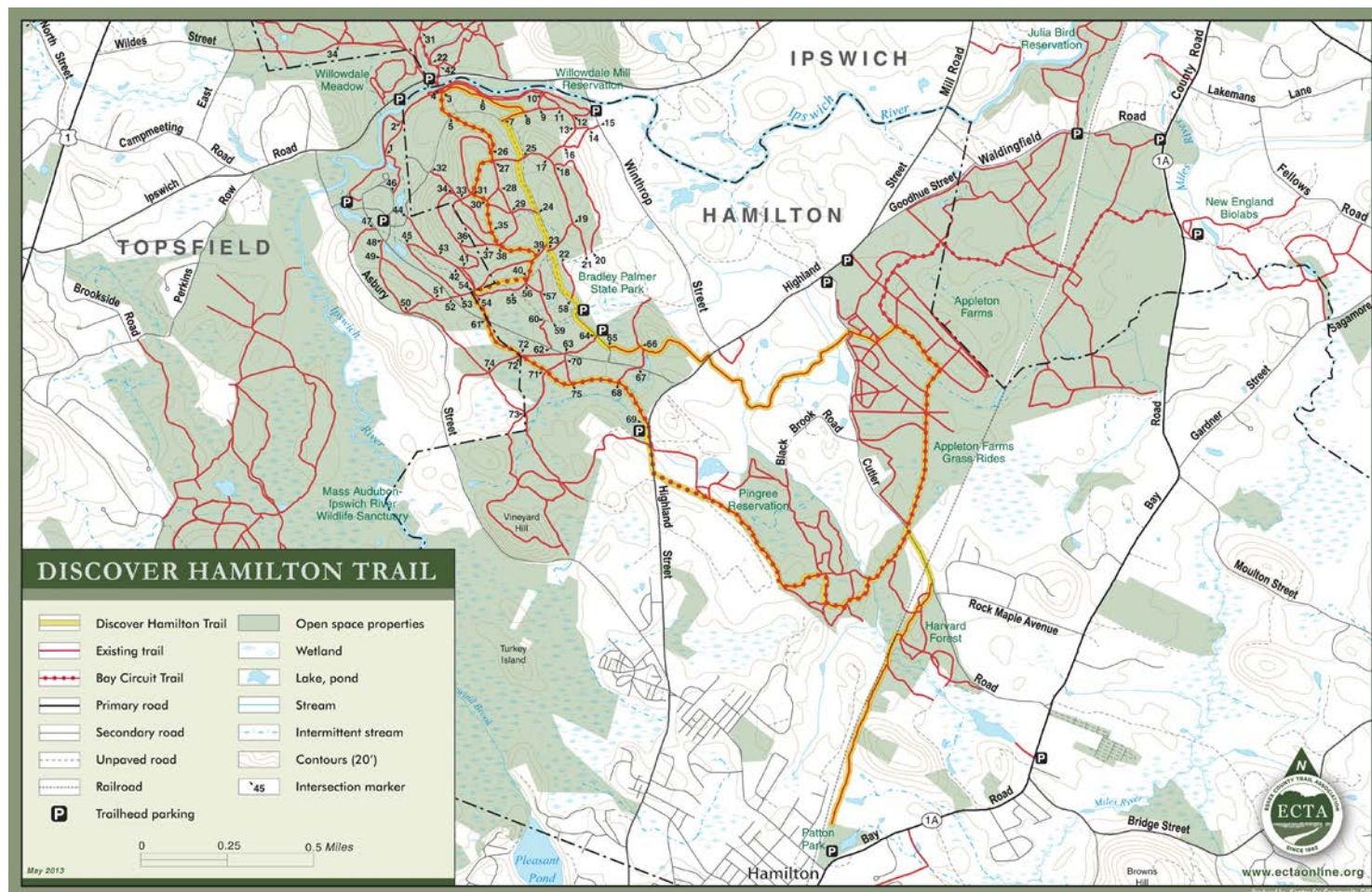




Photo credits: Jeff Dearman & Kevin Gmyrek

ECTA & WNOS Partner on Riverbend Bridge & Boardwalk Project

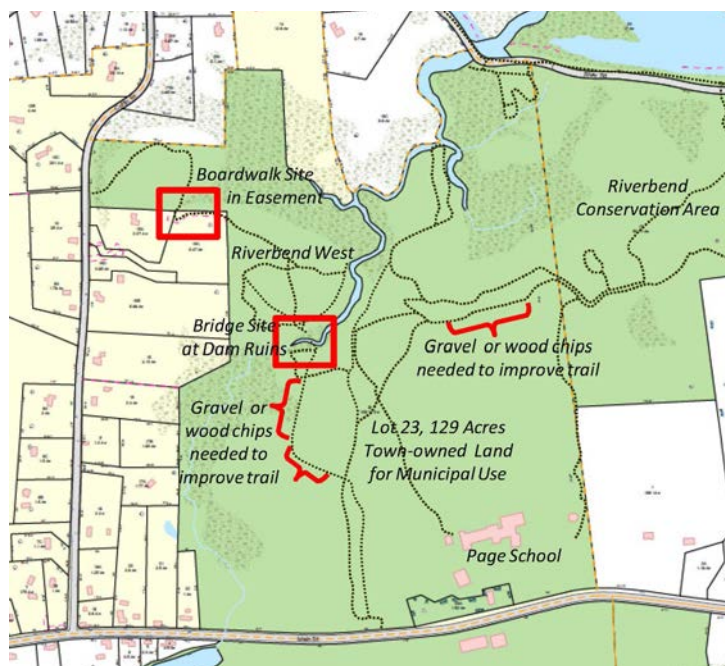
The West Newbury Open Space Committee was recently awarded a grant from the Community Preservation Act Committee to complete trail improvements at the Riverbend Conservation Area behind the Page School.

In 2012, ECTA was granted a trail easement connecting Riverbend West to Coffin Street. The Open Space Committee and volunteers worked to clear the existing trails and to expand and re-mark the trail network at Riverbend West last fall. However, most trails users were not able to cross the Indian River to be able to access this new destination from Riverbend East and the Page School.

The proposed trail project includes a bridge over the Indian River, a 50' boardwalk through a muddy area to connect Riverbend West to Coffin Street, and crushed stone work in several muddy sections of trail throughout the Conservation Area.

ECTA is currently working with environmental engineers to survey the wetlands and will file the permit applications through the Town of West Newbury Conservation Commission. Volunteers from ECTA and

the Open Space Committee will work together later this summer to construct the bridge and boardwalk.



Map of Riverbend from WNOS Project Proposal

Myopia Polo Day Honoring ECTA Founding Member Neil R. Ayer

On June 23rd, 70 ECTA members and guests joined us at the Myopia Hunt Club in Hamilton to experience the thrill of the "Sport of Kings." It was particularly fitting that ECTA's Polo Day fell on the same day as the Neil R. Ayer Cup this year, as Neil was one of the founding members of ECTA at its inception in 1982.

As guests enjoyed a picnic lunch, Myopia Polo Manager Nick Snow explained the basics of the sport, demonstrating the various types of shots, penalties, and equipment. Spectators then enjoyed the final match in the Myopia Club tournament between the Myopia and Del Rancho teams.

While players took a much-needed break between chukkers, ECTA and Myopia Driving Club members Susan Koso and Kat Tremblay treated guests to a pleasure driving demonstration with their antique carriages driven by ponies Hope and Metallica.

The final chukker of the match led to a 7-5 win by the Del Rancho team (Bryan Parrott, Dave Strouss, Allyson Poor & Rick Salter). Kurt Miller took home MVP, and Best Playing Pony went to Dr. Parrott's "Bobby Brown."

Thank you to our sponsors Salem Five Charitable Foundation, Turkey Shore Distilleries, Ipswich Ale Brewery, EBSCO Publishing and Institution for Savings, and to all of our volunteers. We hope that you will all join us next year at this great event!



Photo credits: James R. Nelon

Think About It: A Major Challenge

Think about it...What do you do when you're riding, hiking, biking, jogging, or just walking the dog, and your path is blocked by a fallen tree, or by flooding from a beaver dam just downstream? You call the Essex County Trail Association and we send out one of our team members to repair the trails!

But do you ever think about how it happens that you have the trails to use at all? If a few foresighted individuals had not had the vision and commitment to create ECTA thirty-one years ago, there would likely be little or no access to the countryside, no trail management, and certainly no continuity to the networks in our towns.

Think about how important this access is to all of us and to our way of life, and think about what it takes to keep the trails open and connected. As properties change hands and development threatens, we count on your support more than ever to care for our network of 450 miles of public and private trails, and to acquire more permanent easements.

This summer, a few dedicated ECTA supporters have initiated a dollar-for-dollar matching gift challenge up to \$25,000 for contributions pledged by October 1st and paid for by the end of the year. Please take this opportunity to double the value of your contribution to ECTA so we can keep the trails open and clear for you and for the future. ***We ask you to join these individuals and support ECTA now with as generous a contribution as you are able to give in support of the important work of the ECTA.***

For further information, please contact Ray Denis at 978-239-2024 or e-mail ray@ectaonline.org.

Explore With Us at Our Monthly Trail Events!

Thanks to our wonderful volunteer event leaders, ECTA is moving into the second year of our Monthly Trail Events series. These events are intended to encourage trail users to visit unfamiliar areas or perhaps try out a new trail activity. With walks, ski trips, bike rides and equestrian rides, we try to offer something for all of our trail users!

We kicked off this year's events with the Hike to the Black Cow through Appleton Farms and the Pingree Reservation in January. Though the weather wouldn't cooperate for a ski trip, we had a great walk with a mid-way hot cocoa stop and a hearty lunch afterward!

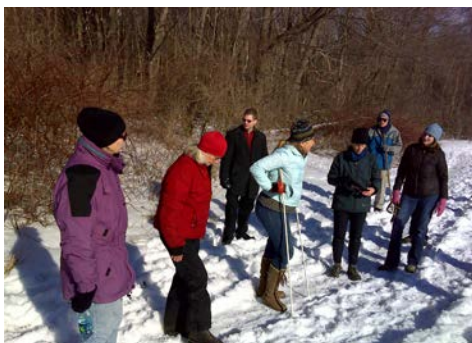
Weather again foiled our February ski trek planned for Willowdale, but Joe Sandulli and Frederick Winthrop were able to plan a last-minute ski trip through Turner Hill Farm in Ipswich after one of our few snowstorms in March! Later that month we explored the trails at Mill Pond and Pipestave Hill in West

Newbury with Deb Hamilton and Ellen Alden.

April brought us out to the Rail Trail where we followed Joe Geller on a 14-mile round trip ride from Topsfield Center to Rt. 114. Kate Day, from the Danvers Planning Department, met us at Danvers Indoor Sports for a brief talk on how creative partnerships made the Rail Trail a reality.

Following the Discover Hamilton Trail Walk in May, we hosted two events in June: Joe Sandulli and Dan Mayer led us on a tree ID walk at the Ipswich River Watershed Association and Sue McLaughlin guided us on the trails at Chebacco Woods and Gordon College.

We hope that you can join us at one of our events this summer or fall - check our website for upcoming events. If you are interested in leading a trail event or have suggestions for a location, we'd love to hear from you!



ECTAthlon (cont'd.)

coincidentally had all competed in at least one prior ECTAthlon event. Our overall winners were the Wild Woodsmen, made up of Greg & Eric Krathwohl, John Mulkerin & Joe Sandulli. Once again, Greg's time of 19:49 on the trail run couldn't be touched! The BillieBo Farm team of Patricia Henwood, David Young, Leslie Milne & Richard Klajnscek clinched second place, and the EBSCO Pickled Herrings, Dana & Josh Bradshaw, Erin Cheever & Alex Saltzman, took third. Congratulations also to the Hippy Chicks for Best Team Attire and the Raiders of the Lost Arch(itects) for Best Team Name!

Many thanks to our event sponsors: EBSCO Publishing, Institution for Savings, Ipswich Bay Glass & Ipswich Ale Brewery. EBSCO also generously hosted our finish celebration, and we owe a huge thanks to their facilities staff. Thank you also to the local businesses who donated our awards and prizes: Pinnacle Bike Shop, New England Running Co., Essex County Co-op, Essex River Basin Adventures, REI of Reading and the Ipswich YMCA.

Thank you to all of the participants and volunteers who made the 3rd Annual ECTAthlon a huge success!!



Photo credits: Nathaniel Hevelone, Kim Cutler, Ashley Hill



Thank You to All of Our Event Volunteers!

Equine Expo

Terry Burns
Tricia Coffey
Susanna Colloredo
Liz Coigley
Karen Delfucco
Ray Dennis
Faith Evans
Sharon Elliott
Tammy Gardner
Bonnie Gulick
Kim Hackett -Ort
Ashley Hill
Kay Joseph
Susan Lawrence
Molly Lister
Rick Loomis
Arlene Maginn
Pam Mansfield
Sue McLaughlin
Judy Milano
Maureen O'Neil
Emily Paras
Elaine Robson
Susan Sandler
Joe Sandulli
Linda Shuksteris
Deborah Stanton

Monthly Trail Events

Deb Hamilton
Frederick Winthrop
Joe Geller
Kate Day
Sue McLaughlin
Ellen Alden
Joe Sandulli
Dan Mayer

Annual Meeting

Lily Stewart
Byron Johnson

Discover Hamilton Trail Walk

John Hendrickson
Charles Brunault

Polo Day

Cami Beckman
Felicity Beech
Jennifer Berryman
Susanna Colloredo
Kim Cutler
Ray Denis
Julie DePaolis
Deb Hamilton
Joan Henderson
Susan Koso
Susan Lawrence
Debra Milasincic
Mary Milgrom
Jean Murray
Mat Perry
Kate Prestero
Holly Pulsifer
Allyson Seinfeld
Nick Snow
Kat Tremblay
Wendy Wood
Claudia Woods-Estin

ECTAthlon

Zach Abruzzo
Bryn Barror
Felicity Beech
Sophiea Bitel
Robin Bornstein

Deborah Breen
Charles Brunault
Peter Campot
Catherine Carney-Feldman
Susanna Colloredo
Ray Cook
Kim Cutler
Ray Denis
Andrea Ebinger
David Feldman
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Carol Lloyd
Tom Mailhott
Rob Martin
Rick McNeill
Phil Murphy
Kim Pedersen
Joshua Regula
Paul Rizk
Phil Sachs
Debra Sager
Robert Scherer-Hoock
Kelly Scott
Rick Silverman
Ruth Stelletella
Diane Stewart
Alex Van Alen
Claudia Woods-Estin

View from the Chair (cont'd.)

review our mission statement.

"The Essex County Trail Association exists to protect access to the trails and open lands throughout Hamilton, Wenham, Ipswich, Topsfield, Essex and West Newbury. We partner with both public and private landowners to ensure that the experience of open trails is positive for them as well as the trail users." Although ECTA was not able to secure an easement at Aquila Farm prior to sale, we are now prepared to work with the future landowners to see if there is any way that we can maintain access through the property.

The second area of misinformation concerns our membership and who we represent. There is a perception that ECTA is an equestrian organization and that our members are all part of an elite economic class. I cannot think of a more diverse group of people, literally from all walks of life. Yes many of our members (less than 60%) are equestrians who use the trails frequently and care about them deeply, but I can also speak from experience that the horse community is more diverse than most people are aware of, both economically and by every other possible standard. The remaining 40% of our membership includes walkers, runners, mountain bikers, cross-country skiers and paddlers.

Our membership and supporters consistently care about our trail system and open space and we are committed to trying to maintain and preserve both. And that brings me back to how I started. Thankfully, we do have some generous landowners and supporters who share the same values and have the means to contribute financially or with the gift of a trail easement. If they did not care so deeply about preserving these resources, almost none of our trail system or open space would exist. We are fortunate to have them and even more fortunate that we all share common values.

I only hope the calls keep coming.

Enjoy your summer,
Peter

2013 Lead Sponsors



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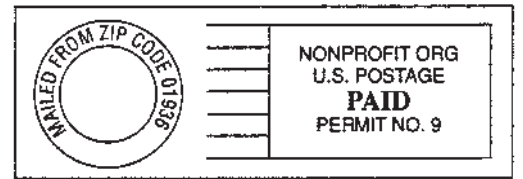
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Essex County Trail Association
P.O. Box 358
Hamilton, MA 01936



The Essex County Trail Association is dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of open trails in our local communities for the purpose of passive recreation and the benefit of the environment. The ECTA works to build coalitions with national and local associations, to serve as liaison between membership and landowners, and to encourage responsible trail use.

