

## **Eastern Trail Purpose and Need Statement**

The **purpose** of the Eastern Trail is to:

- Establish a four-season, non motorized, multipurpose, transportation and recreation trail between Portsmouth, New Hampshire and South Portland, Maine, serving as the southern Maine portion of the East Coast Greenway.
- Promote trail-associated economic development in York and Cumberland Counties by providing a trail directly serving the recreational, commercial, and social activities of residents and visitors to the southern Maine region.

The **needs** for the Eastern Trail are to:

- Join the network of multi-use trails in the United States and Canada and provide the route for the East Coast Greenway in southern Maine. Incorporate the trail into the Maine Department of Transportation's vision of a continuous multi-modal route from Boston to Portland, Portland to the New Hampshire White Mountains, and north to trails and related routes in Brunswick and in the mid-coast and Downeast regions;
- Begin with a trail segment at least 50 miles long to make it worthwhile for people to come from substantial distances and stay in the area for several days to use it. Bring trail users into the centers of the towns along the trail so they can benefit from the availability of services and accommodations and so businesses can benefit from the visitors' patronage;
- Reopen an important piece of Maine transportation history, the first rail line into the State, using the trail to link rail history with the continued important role this resource will play in southern Maine. Utilize the former railroad and current utility corridor rights-of-way and other public lands and easements in such a way as to minimize the cost of the trail;
- Provide a multi-use trail connection among areas of historical and natural significance in southern Maine, including existing local trail systems, the beach areas and inland plains, and towns and cities both on and near the trail. Provide, where possible, an off-road transportation and recreation trail for access to areas of scenic beauty, as well as a quiet and safe transportation alternative for all ages and abilities. Form connections between towns as a thread to promote regional cooperation in tourism development plans. Provide direct connections and transportation loops to towns and special attractions using both on-road and off-road alternatives; and
- Provide safe transportation corridors for all trail users through congested urban areas. Provide a safe, inviting facility to encourage regular healthy exercise for transportation and recreation.