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Eastern Trail Alliance Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2014

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New safety signs will be posted on the ET

Has the Eastern Trail Had an Economic Impact on Southern Maine

By John Andrews

How much money are ET users spending to enjoy the ET?

Thanks to a generous grant from Kennebunk Savings Bank, this year the Eastern Trail Alliance was able to measure the economic impact of the Eastern Trail. ETA applied a methodology developed by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's Carl Knoch, the main speaker at ETA's 2014 annual Meeting.

Carl developed a questionnaire that asks trail users what they spend to enjoy their trail. He found that they buy soft goods like ice cream, and sleeping accommodations and they buy hard goods like hiking boots and bicycle helmets. The ETA, also following Carl's methodology, installed trailside electronic traffic counters.

Preliminary 2014 results are in for some off-road ET sections.

First we learned some interesting things about our users.

- 23% of responders were first-time users.
- 85% of responders were more than 45 years old.
- The average user reported spending \$144 annually to support ET activities for bicycles, bike racks, boots, etc.
- The average user reported spending \$9.89 per visit on ice cream, meals, housing, and transportation.

- 78% reported having earned more than a high school diploma. (4% reported having Ph.D.'s)
- 30% reported annual incomes of greater than \$100K.

Preliminary results show an estimated 67,000 annual ET user visits. Those users spent \$663 thousand on soft goods including motel rooms and ice cream. They also spent \$307 thousand for bicycles, boots and other hard goods. This added almost a \$1 million to the local economy. ETA plans to publish a detailed report in January 2015.



TRAFx Brand Trail Traffic Counter Installed on an ET Mileage U-Post
Infrared "events" are counted and stored electronically.

Discover the Southern Eastern Trail *By Shawn Works*

The Southern Eastern Trail Association finished the fall with the last of our "Discover the Southern Eastern Trail" community rides this October. This series of rides allowed members of SETA and the public to experience the trails in manageable sections, each between 8-12 miles. With the smaller distances, the members of SETA were able to point out sites of historical significance and the scenic landscapes. Each month, we focused on a different town along the Eastern Trail with mostly on-road rides, starting in Kittery and working our way up through Eliot,

South Berwick, North Berwick/Wells, ending at Kennebunk.

While turnouts weren't as high as we had hoped, the series did allow for the Southern Eastern Trail Association members to get a good feel for roads and traffic patterns along the trail, allowing us to modify the ride to better suit our audience of families and casual bike riders. It also helped to highlight how important having the trail is, with the lack of safe family-friendly,

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President's Report

— Bob Hamblen, ETA President

What do You Want to do Today?

"Where do you want to go out to eat?" "I don't care, you pick."

"Where should we vacation this spring?" "Anywhere's okay."

"What do you want to see at the movies?" "Why don't you pick?"

I'm sure no one reading this has ever been part of such a discussion. And for gosh sakes, don't tell Jane I'm tattling on her. There comes a time, however, when one must (as they say) pedal the danged bike or park it. Walk down the trail or settle onto the couch. Or ... contact us here at the ETA and let us know, how does this trail suit you? What would you change? Any ideas on how to improve it? Are there other trails you've enjoyed that got this or that *just right*, and you're waiting to see when the Eastern Trail Alliance will make that same improvement or adopt that same policy?

Well, here to tell you we're all ears. The Trail as we know it today has been in place since 2011, when the 4.3 mile OOB-Saco section was opened. At that point the bicycle and pedestrian world was already smarting from a lack of Congressional support, and funding has been cut more since then. So the funding that never did grow on trees has gotten even more sparse. Consequently, not much trail has been built lately.

The notable exception: work on closing a portion of the one-mile gap remaining between Scarborough and South Portland will get under way this winter, so that soon we'll need *only* to bridge a river and a rail line to connect off-road all the way from Bug Light Park in South Portland to the Thornton Academy campus in Saco.

But, I digress. Yes, it's great that more trail building is almost upon us, but – how do you like what's out there now? Are there enough benches? Do you know where to park to use the Trail? Is there enough parking? How about the gravel and stone dust surface that makes up most of the Eastern Trail – does it work for you? Would a paved trail be better? Is the Trail's condition okay for riding a bike? Walking? Pushing a stroller? Are other users considerate, and do you return the favor? Restrooms – enough, or are there facilities nearby that meet the need?

How about programming? If there were more organized events taking place, would you participate in a walk, a run, a ride? A nature walk? Drawing or painting classes? If you're an educator, have you considered introducing your classes to the Trail for science, physical education, or art purposes? Would you like to mull the options with an ETA staffer?

The Eastern Trail is *our* trail – yours, mine, ours. Help us make it better. We want to hear your ideas. Give a call, send an e-mail, drop us a note – just don't tell us, "You pick."



(Photo by Jim Bucar)

Discover the Southern ET

(Continued from page 1)

off-road riding and activity areas that the finished trail will provide.

The Southern Eastern Trail Association will continue to plan more activities to spread the word about the Eastern Trail. We plan to work closely with town Parks and Rec departments this coming year for the second series of Discover the Southern Eastern Trail community rides. We are also planning to help continue the excitement and promise of the off-road trail making its way through Kennebunk and Wells, and to increase support for the trail in North Berwick.

If you are interested in helping out or would just like more information, please join us on the third Thursday of the month. Meeting locations are listed on the Eastern Trail website.



Discover the Southern Eastern Trail" Ride

(Photo by Carl Works)

Spreading the Word about the Eastern Trail Throughout Maine, the Nation, and the World!

By Larry Glantz

The newsletter you are reading is one of the ETA's important educational tools used to spread the word about the Eastern Trail – how we are building it, how people are using it, and how plans are in the works to continue and expand efforts to build the trail so more people can enjoy its great benefits.

Another important education tool that we use is the Eastern Trail web site at www.EasternTrail.org. Have you visited that site? When was the last time that you checked the site for new updates, for announcements of scheduled events, or perhaps to register for the Maine Lighthouse Ride?

The Eastern Trail Alliance has had a website for over 15 years. The first version was rolled out in 1999 to communicate the Eastern Trail vision regionally, state-wide and nationally. That early effort was so successful that the site won American Trails' best local trail website award in 2003. The site told the great story of how the Eastern Trail dream was being created by John Andrews and the other early visionaries, and was able to take that story to a broad audience.

And that remains the case today. The story of the great success of the Maine Lighthouse Ride; the story of the bridge over the Maine Turnpike, and over Route 1 in Saco; the great story of the Eastern Trail Management District and the extensive contributions of the municipalities along the trail— All of these stories and more are being developed and broadcast via the Eastern Trail Web site.

How has the web site helped you get the information that you need about the trail?



Examples of the importance of this web site include the following:

- **Letting people know about the trail and how it can be used** – The web site publishes events such as the monthly moonlight walk throughout the year, and during the summer lists many trail events, while keeping users informed of trail conditions in a timely manner.
- **Signing up riders for the Maine Lighthouse Ride**, the primary fundraiser for the ETA. The far reach of the web site, together with rider feedback, helped to earn recognition of the Lighthouse ride as one of the nation's best century rides. Connection with national cycling websites as well as Google and other search engines also helped us to fill all MLR slots weeks before the event.
- **Recruiting new volunteers and trail advocates** – Advertising volunteer needs but also showing how fun and satisfying it can be to volunteer with the ETA.
- **Promoting Sponsors who are helping the ETA in many ways** – There is a slide show on the front page showing the company logos of our major sponsors, and also a full page of logos of supporters of the Maine Lighthouse Ride.
- **Communicating many other stories** of how ETA members, Maine residents, and others are building, maintaining, enjoying and promoting the Eastern Trail.

Larry Glantz continues in his role as part-time staff to build the content and functionality of the site using the new design that Tim Lambert and others developed in 2011.

Visitors come to the site from all over the world. The countries with the largest number of site visitors are Canada, Great Britain, the Netherlands and . . . Russia. Most visitors find their way to the site from internet search engines, such as Google, Yahoo, and Bing. Many find our site through links on Active.com (registration site for the Maine Lighthouse Ride and similar cycling and trail events), the East Coast Greenway site, the Maine Bicycle Coalition site, from FaceBook, and even from the web sites of towns along the Eastern Trail.

We encourage all friends of the Eastern Trail to use the web site, but also to provide feedback on what works, and what could be added to the site to make it better. Please forward all ideas to webmaster@EasternTrail.org.



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Welcome to New ETA Members

Gerald Autler
Darlene Beach
Susan Bloomfield-DeCoster
Allen Bruce
Robert Bryant
Mary Campbell
Edward Carlman
Linda Casale
Marty Cohen
Gerri & Michael Dansky
John-Peter Dunn
Stephen Fitts
Alesha Forget
Bruce Gallup
Linda Gardner
Jeremy Harmon
Daniel Hoffman
Kathleen Janick
Marcia Jansen
Kathleen Jewett

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Eastern Trail Alliance Staff

Carole Brush
Executive Director
Scott Marcoux
Communications Coordinator
Larry Glantz
Web Coordinator

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www.EasternTrail.org

Welcome to New ETA Members

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- William Jones
- Lise Kirk
- Susan Kline
- Irving Kurki
- Denis Lachman
- Richard & Carol Lahue
- Mary Maran
- J. Clayton McConnell
- Joe McManus
- Kevin Moriarty
- Charles Murphy
- Kate Murray
- Bion Noble, Jr.
- Dawn Pelletier
- Marjorie & James Pendleton
- Larry Perkins
- George Perkinson
- Sage Peterson
- Amy Picotte
- Debra Richard
- David Ross
- Jayne Schiff-Verre
- Cynthia Snow
- Judith Spiller
- Kathryn Stannard
- Robert & Karla Talianian
- Courtney Thompson
- Richard White
- Harry & Mary Wiley
- Kristine Wing
- Shawn Works

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The ET Loop & Lunch Bunch

By Russ Lamer

In 2013 I retired and knew I wanted to be very active doing things I like to do, especially outdoors. So I came up with the idea of leading bike trips on the Eastern Trail. I approached Carole Brush, Executive Director of Eastern Trail Alliance, and Scott Marcoux head of ETA communications and bounced the idea off them. We immediately decided the structure of the rides:

- Foremost, we wanted to promote the Eastern Trail.
- The rides to be more than 30 miles but less than 50.
- Riders needed to ride an average speed of 13 to 15 mph.
- Group size limited to 25 riders, and these rides were to be social events so lunch included.

In 2013 the first ET Loop & Lunch Ride was held on a weekday in July, the hottest day of the

summer. There were a whopping four riders. Still, we had a great ride, followed by lunch at Run of the Mill Restaurant in Saco. However, future Loop & Lunch rides were changed to Saturdays to attract more riders.

The routes vary every ride and always include an off-road section of the ET. Riders have enjoyed lunches at Run of the Mill in Saco, Duffy's in Kennebunk, and Seed & Bean in Kennebunk—plus several stops at Bayley's Ice Cream. The trail is beautiful, and the whole purpose of the rides is to build awareness of it.

Today we are known as the ET Loop & Lunch Bunch. We have held five L & L rides this past year, and we are up to 20 riders on the ET trips with an email list of 40. In addition we have our own Loop & Lunch Bunch Facebook page.

The fun part is riding, seeing beautiful country, enjoying the trail, and building long-lasting friendships. Give it a try next year...you'll like it!



The First Ride had 4 riders.



Later rides had many more.



Loop & Lunch Bunch on the trail. (Photo by Bob Bemoth)

2014 Maine Lighthouse Ride Shatters Previous Records!

By Bob Bowker

With 1,200 riders registered, and over 1,000 cyclists on ride day, the 2014 Maine Lighthouse Ride shattered the previous 2013 records! Over 470 riders registered for the century ride (100-miles), 338 for the metric century (62-miles), 276 for the 40-mile ride, and 119 signed up for the 25-mile circuit. Although the threat of afternoon thunderstorms caused many riders to change their route at the last minute (which created a bit of confusion at the rest stops), the rain held off until late in the afternoon, affecting only a handful of the 1,000 riders.

This year's cyclists represented over 30 states and Canadian provinces! From talking to the riders, it was clear that the Maine Lighthouse Ride was their destination, with most of the out-of-state cyclists coming to Maine specifically for the

MLR. Do you think cycling is a male-dominated sport? Think again! Fifty-four percent of our riders were women, with 214 signed up for the 100-mile ride. You go, ladies!

Once again, our wonderful volunteers (over 90!) made the ride a huge success. Read the rider surveys in response to the question – What did you like best about the ride? – and you will see the resounding answer: “the great volunteers.” Our surveys also showed that 99.5% of the riders

had a positive experience, and 80% will be back next year. Tough to beat those stats! Well try this: we have already had inquiries from an Iowa cycling club that plans to send 100 riders to the 2015 MLR. Hang on to your helmets folks, we're already planning next year's ride, which will be even better yet!



Enjoying the Scenic MLR

(Photo by Jim Bucar)

Biking is very popular in Amsterdam



Hundreds of parked bikes; among thousands(!) at Central [train] Station



Bikes and Canals



Bike paths down the middle of sidewalk

(Photos by Jim Bucar)

Best water stop at Rev 3



Joe Yuhas playing the pipes

(Photo by Jim Bucar)

In August a group of 11 ETA volunteers manned a water stop at the Rev 3 Triathlon held in Old Orchard Beach. The ETA received a \$100 reward for having the best water stop, in large part due to Maestro Joe serenading the runners as they came by.

2014 Maine Lighthouse Ride Sponsors

A+ Party Rental
Atayne
Bergen & Parkinson, LLC
Biddeford Savings Bank
Bowker & Associates
Brown Industrial Group
Cabot Cheese
City of Biddeford
City of South Portland
Clean Harbors
Coastal Healthy Communities Coalition
Creative Awards
Doyle Enterprises
Friends from Hallowell

Kennebunkport Bicycle
Kittery Trading Post
Michael Boyson & Nancy Grant
Michaud Distributors
Micro Support Group
Moody's Collision
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
North Dam Mill
Ocean Park Association
P&C Insurance
Peoples Choice Credit Union
Portland Water District
Road ID
Rodger's Sports

Saco/Biddeford Savings
Scott Dow
Sooper Dogs & Cats
Southern Maine Community College
State of Maine - Kettle Cove
Town of Kennebunk
Town of OOB
Town of Scarborough
Walgreen's
Woodman Edmands Danylik
Austin Smith & Jacques P.A.
York Hopsital
York Hospital - Choose to be Healthy

Join Us – the All-Volunteer ETA

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> \$35 Individual | Name _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> \$50 Family | |
| <input type="radio"/> \$75 Trailblazer | Street Address _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> \$150 Pioneer | |
| <input type="radio"/> \$1000 Lifetime | City, State, Zip _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> \$250 Corporate | |
| <input type="radio"/> \$250 Municipality | Email _____ |

Make check payable to the ETA and mail to our address below, or join on our web site, www.eastertrail.org using a credit cards. The ETA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit: your donations are tax deductible.

Eastern Trail Alliance, P.O. Box 250, Saco, Maine 04072 - 207-284-9260



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ETA Thanks Major Donors

Biddeford Savings Bank

Chiropractic Family Wellness Center

Coastal Healthy Communities Coalition

Diversified Communications

Kennebunk Savings Bank

Peoples Choice Credit Union

Rev 3 Triathlon

Revision Energy

Saco & Biddeford Savings

UNUM

York Hospital

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THE EASTERN TRAIL

A transportation-recreation greenway
connecting Kittery to Casco Bay in South Portland

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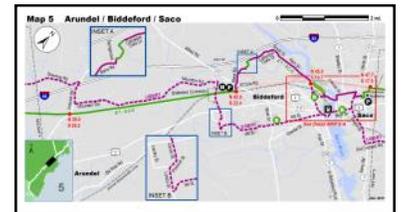
Second Edition available now:

Up-to-Date Full-Color Guide to the Eastern Trail

Features:

- New Kennebunk-Arundel-Biddeford and Saco to Old orchard Beach sections.
- High resolution, 1 mile per inch scale.
- Cue sheets from Kittery to Casco Bay.
- The all on-road US Bike Route 1, approved by Maine DOT and American Association of State Highway Traffic Organizations, AASHTO.
- Expected Future off-road ET routes.
- Sized to fit snugly into a handlebar bag with viewing window.

Available for purchase or download at www.easterntrail.org



Northbound		Southbound	
Dist.	Per. Notes	Dist.	Per. Notes
43.1	40.0 Miles	43.1	40.0 Miles
39.3	5.7 Section Trail	39.3	5.7 Section Trail
38.7	5.7 Section Trail	38.7	5.7 Section Trail
38.2	5.5 Section Trail	38.2	5.5 Section Trail
37.7	5.5 Section Trail	37.7	5.5 Section Trail
37.2	5.5 Section Trail	37.2	5.5 Section Trail
36.7	5.5 Section Trail	36.7	5.5 Section Trail
36.2	5.5 Section Trail	36.2	5.5 Section Trail
35.7	5.5 Section Trail	35.7	5.5 Section Trail
35.2	5.5 Section Trail	35.2	5.5 Section Trail
34.7	5.5 Section Trail	34.7	5.5 Section Trail
34.2	5.5 Section Trail	34.2	5.5 Section Trail
33.7	5.5 Section Trail	33.7	5.5 Section Trail
33.2	5.5 Section Trail	33.2	5.5 Section Trail
32.7	5.5 Section Trail	32.7	5.5 Section Trail
32.2	5.5 Section Trail	32.2	5.5 Section Trail
31.7	5.5 Section Trail	31.7	5.5 Section Trail
31.2	5.5 Section Trail	31.2	5.5 Section Trail
30.7	5.5 Section Trail	30.7	5.5 Section Trail
30.2	5.5 Section Trail	30.2	5.5 Section Trail
29.7	5.5 Section Trail	29.7	5.5 Section Trail
29.2	5.5 Section Trail	29.2	5.5 Section Trail
28.7	5.5 Section Trail	28.7	5.5 Section Trail
28.2	5.5 Section Trail	28.2	5.5 Section Trail
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15.7	5.5 Section Trail	15.7	5.5 Section Trail
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10.7	5.5 Section Trail	10.7	5.5 Section Trail
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3.2	5.5 Section Trail	3.2	5.5 Section Trail
2.7	5.5 Section Trail	2.7	5.5 Section Trail
2.2	5.5 Section Trail	2.2	5.5 Section Trail
1.7	5.5 Section Trail	1.7	5.5 Section Trail
1.2	5.5 Section Trail	1.2	5.5 Section Trail
0.7	5.5 Section Trail	0.7	5.5 Section Trail
0.2	5.5 Section Trail	0.2	5.5 Section Trail

Join online or invite a friend to join online at www.EasternTrail.org

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