



Eastern Trail Alliance

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WEBSITE REDESIGN REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Eastern Trail Alliance (ETA) seeks proposals for a redesigned website. Proposals should include timeline, cost, and deliverables. The details that follow are subject to change upon vendor recommendation and/or research of more optimal solutions. In your proposal, please feel free to suggest alternatives.

Project Overview

Our current website – www.easterntail.org – has operated since 1997 and underwent a major redesign approximately ten years ago which resulted in its current custom WordPress theme. The design and its content are outdated and while once responsive, it is now showing display problems on some smartphones and tablet devices. The current site is not effectively and efficiently communicating with today's Eastern Trail users and supporters. We would like to update it with a site that better fits our current and future needs and centers trail user experiences.

Background

The Eastern Trail is a visionary plan for a long-distance walking and bicycling trail that will one day extend continuously off-road from South Portland to the Maine-New Hampshire border. Today, you can cycle across the Scarborough Marsh, walk through the woods of Saco or Kennebunk, and enjoy more than 20 miles of completed off-road, multi-use trail in southern Maine.

The membership-based Eastern Trail Alliance (ETA) was incorporated in 1999 and the regional semi-municipal organization the Eastern Trail Management District (ETMD) was incorporated in 2001. Together the sister organizations manage the trail. The ETA is tasked with engaging members and partners, promoting the trail, and facilitating programs that encourage communities and individuals to use it while the ETMD works with municipalities to maintain and expand the trail's path.

The sister organizations share an executive director, the only full-time staff member of both organizations, who reports to two separate and independent boards of directors. The ETA also employs a part-time office manager and a part-time trail manager as well as two independent contractors that work on web administration, communications, and the annual Maine Lighthouse Ride. The two organizations share a website.

Project Goals

The primary objective of the new Eastern Trail website is to tell the public how to use the Eastern Trail and get involved with the Eastern Trail Alliance. Secondary objectives include to show the value of the Eastern Trail Alliance and the Eastern Trail to individuals and communities in southern Maine and to share plans and updates regarding Eastern Trail expansion. Overall, this redesign aims to create a website that will:

- Present a visually compelling introduction to the Eastern Trail, the work of the Eastern Trail Alliance and its impact on southern Maine. Current projects and historical information should be included with links to more detailed and/or archived information so as to not clutter the primary site content and navigation.
- Present a modern look and functionality that makes it easy for visitors to find resources and information on how to use the Eastern Trail and get involved with the ETA through programs, events, volunteer opportunities, donating, and more.
- Provide seamless integration with third party platforms.
- Provide a secure website that is also easy for ETA staff to update and maintain once trained.

Audience

Our audience consists of southern Maine residents and people visiting southern Maine. Their age is varied. Our events typically draw retired individuals whereas young families and students are more likely to use the trail on their own or as part of school-related activities.

Primary Audience: Trail Users and Visitors

Top challenges for our primary audience include:

- Trail users and visitors should have a pleasant experience learning how to use the Eastern Trail including where to go, where to park, what to do, trail maps, rules, and more. Information should be easy to find, understand, and use. This includes both trip-planning resources and real-time information that helps users while cycling or walking on the trail.
- Trail users and visitors should be able to learn quickly about ETA's work and be inspired to get involved in programs, events, volunteering, and fundraising campaigns.
- Prospective volunteers should be able to easily find, understand, and express interest in volunteer opportunities. They should be able to envision getting involved whether helping on the Eastern Trail or filling a board role.

Second Audience: Donors

Top challenges for our secondary audience include:

- Optimize donation experience
- Make funding options clear and easy to learn about including corporate sponsorships and opportunities for local business owners to support the Eastern Trail
- Inform donors about the impact of ETA's work
- Help donors feel connected to ETA's work
- Highlight information relevant to government stakeholders at the national, state and local levels responsible for funding opportunities and partnerships
- Integrate well with third party payment platform landing pages

Site Content

The organization seeks to streamline and strengthen both the visual and written content on its website. Existing content will need to be evaluated and refined, with limited material expected to migrate in its current form. The selected vendor will be expected to recommend a content strategy for the new website and develop new content informed by materials and direction provided by the organization. Any recommended additional assets, such as photography or videography, should be quoted separately.

Technical Considerations

E-commerce

We currently use Online Forms from DonorPerfect for online donations and trail guide sales. We are curious to learn more about e-commerce options.

Content Management System

We currently use WordPress CMS version 6.7.2 with various plug-ins.

Web Host

We use EBoundHost.com/JetRails with services that include a shared server, unmetered cpanel and a RapidSSL Wildcard. We have had sporadic problems with site performance and wonder whether this is due to the shared server, page construction and coding, or other factors. We are open to changing hosts and welcome vendor recommendations. In addition, we seek easy-to-use metrics and analytics tools to help track visitor activity and evaluate site performance and user experience.

Site Navigation

We seek a design that provides easier and more effective access to information sought by site visitors.

Responsiveness

The site should be fully functional and visually consistent across a wide range of browsers and devices and meet accessibility standards for all visitors.

Integration

We currently use several third-party applications:

- ConstantContact for newsletters and email communication. (However, we are increasingly curious about MailChimp.)
- DonorPerfect for CRM
- Online Forms from DonorPerfect for donation and payment processing
- EventBrite for event registration
- Square for sales at Events
- Square as a cash app option for donations, primarily at events and at trailhead kiosks
- Facebook, Instagram, and have an unused/underutilized YouTube Channel
- QuickBooksOnline for accounting

Budget

We seek proposals around \$20,000. We will accept proposals that exceed this amount with a strong justification included. Recommended additional assets like photographs, videography, software licenses, services, etc, should be included and quoted separately.

Anticipated Selection Schedule & Timeline

The anticipated RFP schedule is as follows:

- RFP Release Date: October 15, 2025
- RFP Submission Deadline: November 21, 2025
- Interview Period: December 1 - 5, 2025
- Contract Award: December 12, 2025
- Project Kickoff: No later than Dec 24, 2025
- Desired Launch Date: May 2026

Submission Requirements

Please submit your proposal electronically to info@eastertrail.org by November 21, 2025. Your proposal should include the following information:

- Company information and contact details
- Brief overview of your experience and qualifications including proposed project team members and their roles
- A proposed approach to the project, including your design philosophy and methodology
- A detailed project timeline including proposed milestones and delivery schedule
- A detailed agreement for training and post-launch support. Training is an essential component of successful implementation. We ask that you provide comprehensive training to all staff involved in updating information and management of the entire website.
- A detailed budget
- Website examples from at least three past clients
- Contact references from at least three past clients