

Making Things Happen

When I stepped into the role of Executive Director, the ET had four off-road sections totaling 10.5 miles under its belt. Now, I can look back at two more successful projects that have entailed three bridges and doubled the miles of our beautiful trail. Once that amazing Turnpike bridge was completed, the ET phone and email system went on overtime.

In fact, every time the trail expands, so does its visibility, bringing many “opportunities.” For example, the Turnpike Bridge permits us to turn our attention south, where we are moving purposefully on our plans to extend the trail to Kittery. At the same time we are working to close gaps in Scarborough, Saco and Biddeford. Obviously, we still have miles to go before we rest, even when we are building more trail.

As we have added miles, I have experienced heightened levels of enthusiasm and interest. The volume of inquiries has been rewarding—and a little overwhelming: “Where does it start?”, “Where does it end?”, “Can I camp on the trail?”, “How about geo-caching?”, “We want to host an event on the trail”, “Where’s the nearest hotel, bike shop, restaurant?”

With the help of the ETA and ETMD Boards, the ET office responded to all these inquiries and interest by developing an ETMD “Operator’s Manual” to guide the member communities, an “Events Policy” to ensure safe and successful events along the trail, and expanded our visibility by attending more events in the past year than in the prior four year period! We continue to expand our outreach and educational efforts and seek additional sources of funding to continue this growth spurt.

Last year five successful events were held along the trail. This year we have a dozen applications for events thus far, including several 5K fundraisers for various causes, a 30-miler from Kennebunk to Bug Light that will take place on May 18th, a half marathon and a triathlon. Whew! (And it’s still spring.)

The ETA and ETMD have actively been spreading our message through various public events: Chambers of Commerce, “Eggs and Issues” Forums, UNE, SMMC, TI, Hannaford, and other corporate Employee Wellness Programs and Fairs. All of these events, posters and kiosk postings bring new faces to the trail, provide opportunities for local businesses, and increase visibility for our communities.

As we review this spectacular year in review tonight at the Annual Meeting, I look forward to promoting the trail as an unparalleled economic enhancement to our communities, and to finding funding to connect the dots and complete this masterpiece of a trail – one that the Maine DOT has designated as one of the three trails in Maine of “statewide significance.”

I welcome your input; always feel free to give me a call 207-284-9260 or email eta@eastertrail.org. I know that none of this could have happened without everyone’s support.

Thank you,
Carole Brush,
Executive Director