

SETA Report

A committee of ETA, Southern Eastern Trail Alliance (SETA), has been working since 2011 to help ET supporters south of Kennebunk get to meet each other. The ETA has had few members or trustees south of Kennebunk, which has meant little organized grassroots ET support.

SETA can already claim some major successes. Three outstanding new ETA Trustees, all Maine residents who live south of Kennebunk, have joined the ETA Board this year. They are Judy Haley, Vice President of Brown Industrial Group that built the Kennebunk-Arundel-Biddeford section; Marianne Goodine, Assistant Wells Town Manager; and Deborah Erickson-Irons who leads York Hospital's healthy community outreach programs.

Another wonderful success: The towns of Wells and Kennebunk have individually sent letters of intent to MaineDOT that they will submit applications by MaineDOT's June deadline for funds to produce shovel-ready ET design documents for their towns. When successful, this will add close to another 10 miles of off-road greenway to the ET.

But no southern off-road trail has been built. Few southern ET supporters seem to have met each other. Voters' visible support will be needed to convince other residents and their elected officials that they want the ET. Opponents have not been shy. Some vocal fiscal conservatives have been heard opposing spending any public money on the ET. ETA volunteers have been verbally attacked by ATV owners who are unwilling to give up their use of the corridor (by trespass.) One 60ish woman told us the ET will not be allowed to stop her father from hunting (also by trespass) in the gas pipeline corridor while sitting in his folding chair. They who support the trail and share our desire to see it built are often less visible. Perhaps some southern ET supporters hope "they" will make it happen. Democracy really works. Those who speak out are rewarded. Those who are silent are often assumed to support the way things are. - no ET.

SETA needs help to sell the vision of the Eastern Trail and to let your elected officials know you think it's completion is important. If you've not yet tried the ET, take your family for a walk on the ET north from Kennebunk Elementary School. Its entrance is well-marked on Rte. 35 about one mile north of the Rte. 35 Turnpike overpass.

John R. Andrews,
ETA President Emeritus