

What Does It Take To Build a Trail?

(Also known as Deb's 26 ingredients for a successful trail blazing.)

A – John Andrews: Our ETA founder. A man of many hats, red suspenders, and incredible vision who was a friend to many in this room, who passed away this past February. A dedicated and forward-looking man, he was determined and resourceful, and singular in purpose when it came to the Eastern Trail. There's no doubt in my mind that without John Andrews, there'd be no Eastern Trail. Inaugural JA Memorial 5K in Scarborough, May 20.

B – Board! Raise hands of ETA Board Members- bring their expertise and enthusiasm to our work

C – Carole Brush- our fantastic Executive Director – dedicated, hard working, persistent. She increased our grant applications and outreach to media this past year. Thank you Carole!

D-Data – implementing a new database for fundraising, but also economic data, impact study, utilization data, and all kinds of engineering data.

E – ETMD – (Eastern Trail Management District) - municipal representatives along the off road trail and future OF Trail – Thank you ETMD Board members! (Also for Events – the 14th Annual Maine Lighthouse Ride (MLR) is Sept 9; Full Moon Walks each month, 1st Annual John Andrews 5k on May 20, etc.)

F – Fundraising - the way of the future is combining municipal, state, federal, foundation grants and private donations from organizations like Town and Country Federal Credit Union \$100,000 to Close The Gap (CTG), Village Tavern/UPS Store/Cape Arundel Cottage Preserve for sponsoring this meeting, the \$25,000, from WEX, Avangrid and the Thompson Family in South

Portland; Design \$ from the Townships of Wells and Kennebunk. We have only \$525,000 of \$3.8 million left to raise for CTG.

G – Great Members who are involved by paying dues, getting their friends and family to be members, attend events, and volunteer (more about this later – I needed something that started with V) Also for Government – towns need to hear from supporters of the trail and legislators need to hear from you as well.

H – Heart – none of this would happen without the many people in this room, and others who have an absolute passion for being outdoors and creating safe and beautiful spaces to do so.

I – Individual trail supporters – like each of you! Your support is Incredible, Important and illustrates what those with Imagination can do! The ET needs your Involvement.

J – Just bears repeating - John Andrews and friends of John Andrews

K-Kennebunk Town Engineer, Chris Osterrieder– and other town’s engineers!

L-leveraged matching funds; Lighthouses! 9 of them Saturday, Sept 9

M-Maine DOT; Members!

N- Nancy Borg – Program Assistant at the ETA - energetic, positive, and creative. Thank you Nancy!

O-Outreach: educating about the trail as it is and as it can be, getting others involved

P – Portland Area Transportation system funding \$1.1m towards CTG campaign!!

Q-Ryan Quinn – one of our speakers and the Principal of Kennebunk Elementary school, who is a great supporter

R- Railroads! The Eastern Trail is being built along the old Eastern Railroad corridor

S-State of Maine – funding and expertise from the ME DOT and the citizens of Maine whose taxes and budget funds our trail.

T – TIME – Ah, here is the rub – it takes Time to build a trail. ETA started with John Andrews and others in the late 1990s. 2011 Turnpike bridge opened; 2012 Saco – Old Orchard Beach opened; 2015 – Close the Gap campaign to raise \$3.8 million picked up momentum.....

U – Utility Company Unitil, over whose land the Off Road Trail goes.

V – Volunteers: at the MLR, Inaugural JA 5K, as Trail Ambassadors (Training May 23 at Saco Transportation Center). Also for Vision – Complete the 1.6 mile Gap between South Portland and Scarborough, connecting 4 towns; complete an additional 8.6 mile segment from Kennebunk to Wells, connecting 8 towns from South Portland to Wells.

W – Website – thank you to Larry Glantz – fantastic website, find out about events such as Full Moon Walks, renew or start a membership, print a map. And also – walkers to wheelchairs and everybody in between.

X-Expectations – OK, I had to go without an “X”. Cheerleading the ET project is one of managing expectations - “When will you be in South Berwick, or Kittery?”

Y –You – did I mention YOU? Yes, I did. And YEARS, did I mention Years? Yes.

Z- Zeal! Definition of Zeal is, “Great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause.” With continued zeal, in the not too distant future we’ll have the type of success here in the “south” that we’ve had with the Close The Gap project.

That about sums it up!!

Deborah Erickson-Irons, ETA President