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Eastern Trail Alliance Newsletter

Vol. 13, No. 1

Spring/Summer 2012

Major Events on the Eastern Trail 2012

Brief Calendar of Major Events:

- May 16: Opening ceremony of Saco-OOB 4.4 mile section at 10:00AM
- May 17: ETA Annual Meeting at Old Marsh Country Club, Wells
- May 18: Morning ride on ET from Kennebunk to Bug Light — 30 miles; hosted by ETA
- May 28: Annual Snowy Egret Run (Memorial Day)
- July 7: Cabot Creamery Community Celebration Tour
- July 6–8: The 24th Maine Bike Rally in Biddeford.
- Aug. 19: ECGA Members 2012 Tour will leave Portland for New Haven, CT.
- Sept. 8: The 9th Annual Maine Lighthouse Ride

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Enjoy the Trail

For the last few years — especially 2010/11 — ETA expended much of its attention and effort on encouraging and planning for major construction projects that added significant miles to the off-road trail. For 2012, although the preliminary stages of planning for more of such projects will continue, the ETA will concentrate more energy on enjoying and sharing the trail by hosting events and partnering with the East Coast Greenway Alliance for others. As a general rule, if it happens in southern Maine, ETA's hands are usually involved. And all of you are urged to take part, either as volunteers or as participants.

In 2012, the ECGA, responding in part to the Eastern Trail's significant additions to the East Coast Greenway, will be visible in the Portland area in a big way, and it is hoping for an ETA presence in three major events. In a very real sense, these occasions underline the collaborative, symbiotic relationship between an organization with a national purpose and identity — the ECGA — and the regional group — the ETA — without whose local presence, energy, and passion nothing much could happen. This synergy exemplifies the principle of thinking globally and acting locally.

ECGA Trail Council Annual Meeting

The East Coast Greenway Alliance Trail Council will hold one of its two annual meetings in Portland this year, May 18–20. The ETA will host a ride on Friday for meeting attendees as well as the general public (see below). ETA

Trustee, Bob Bowker, is spearheading the trip and could use some volunteers to help with registration, transportation, refreshments, etc. After dinner the same day, there will be a guided tour along the Portland Trail. Saturday and Sunday, the weekend will include gatherings in Portland with opportunities for trail users to talk with and be energized by ECGA and other trail advocates and developers.

Spring Greenway Adventure

Mark your calendars for Friday, May 18 for a fun adventure on the Eastern Trail. We will meet at Bug Light Park in South Portland where we will board vehicles that will transport riders and bikes to the Kennebunk Elementary School. There we will begin a leisurely, 30-mile one-way ride on the ET, which is also the East Coast Greenway, with about 73% of the ride off-road. Ride over the Maine Turnpike and U.S. Route 1 on bridges completed only last fall! Experience the beauty and solitude of the Eastern Trail! We are limiting this ride to 100 riders. Look for announcements on the ETA website regarding registration, and THINK SPRING!



Photos by Jim Bucar

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Major Events on the Eastern Trail 2012

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Cabot Creamery Community 2012 Celebration Tour

The tour, sponsored by the Farmers who own Cabot, will conclude in Portland's Payson Park on July 7 after a ride from Kennebunk. The tour will begin May 13 in Miami Florida, with stops for major events along the ECG in Charleston, Raleigh, Fredericksburg, Wilmington (DE), New York City and Hartford. The concluding event in Portland will include tents and displays at farmer markets, food sampling, biking and running tips, display tables from all participating sponsors, celebrity appearances, biking/running/walking tours, media broadcasts from the site and MORE. All Maine trail groups, particularly the ETA, are encouraged to get involved and participate. Look for details and updates at the Cabot Community and ECGA websites.



Maine Bike Rally in Biddeford

The 24th version of the MBR will be sited in Biddeford, with on-site camping at Biddeford Middle School. As the organizers say, it "is a combined effort of local enthusiasts [e.g., ETA], the Casco Bay Bicycle Club, Merrymeeting Wheelers Bicycle Club, and the Bicycle Coalition of Maine. The three-day event features more than 24 on-road and off-road rides as well as an accredited time-trial event." Many of those rides will be designed or organized by two ETA Bobs — Bowker and Hamblen — and will introduce riders to the splendors of the Eastern Trail and southern Maine's coastal and rural beauties. And, of course, there's more. Volunteers and participants warmly welcomed. For up-to-date information, visit the MBR's website.



ECGA 2012 Members Tour

Each year ECGA members participate in a biking tour along a leg of the ECG. Eventually these annual tours will add up to a traversal of the ECG's entire length from Calais, Maine to Key West, Florida. Last year's leg started in Calais and ended in Portland. This year's leg will leave Portland on August 19 for New Haven, Connecticut. While this invitational tour is limited to ECGA members, local groups (e.g.,



ETA) are encouraged to join and ride their local trail sections. Might be interesting for riders to repeat the May 18 ride route — but in the opposite direction! For more information, consult the ECGA website.

2012 Maine Lighthouse Ride

We held our first planning meeting for the 9th annual ride (in February!), and the new MLR brochure is ready to go to the printer and be distributed. As the annual event's ridership has exploded (688 last year) and the praises have mounted, we have limited changes to tweaks here and there. We will send out 2000 brochures via the spring mailing of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine and continue last year's strategy of mailing brochures to bike shops throughout the northeastern states.



Photos by Jim Bucar



Some of the many ways to enjoy the Eastern Trail.



Photo by Jeanne Peckiconis

SETA - Southern Subcommittee of the ETA

by Anita Rosencrantz

As ETMD President Tad Redway recently wrote, skeptics argued that the “insurmountable” barrier of the Maine Turnpike reduced the Eastern Trail to being “an isolated path to nowhere.” However, in 2011 the Maine Turnpike Bridge created a bridge to *somewhere* very significant: the southern half of the Eastern Trail imagined by the 2003 Feasibility Study. To signal its serious intention to promote extending the off-road reach of the trail, ETA began holding its monthly meetings in Wells and inviting trail enthusiasts to become members of SETA, the southern subcommittee of the ETA. Speaking of Wells, if you happen to pass through the Wells Transportation Center on your way to an Amtrak train, you can't miss a new, very large, ETA poster mounted inside, courtesy of Brent Marriner.

First project target is an almost uninterrupted 19 miles of old railroad corridor used by Unitil for

its gas pipeline, the longest such stretch along the whole trail. The ETA and ETMD have begun discussions with Unitil about of co-location agreements for that extended section like those we have already reached for sections north/east of the turnpike. In addition, we have helped guide local towns to apply for a Transportation Enhancement Grant through Maine's Quality Communities Program, and to seek funding for engineering design for those 19 miles from Kennebunk, through Wells, to Rt. 91 in South Berwick. The process is complicated, and it takes time. But people in those communities are getting interested, involved, and hopeful.



Along the Eastern Trail Kennebunk to South Portland: A Marathon on Foot

The weekend before Christmas a couple of friends and I set out to run/walk from Kennebunk to South Portland along the ET. It was quite a cold start to the morning but it was nice and sunny and since we planned on staying in motion we thought we could stay warm enough.

In the first hour along the Kennebunk to Biddeford section we encountered a group of about 10 runners coming from the Biddeford direction ... more folks braving the cold!! Two of us had started at 7am from Kennebunk and the third person met us in Biddeford behind SMMC. As we approached the Biddeford end of the off road section our friend was jogging toward us ... timing was great. We continued along heading up Cole Rd. to Rt. 1 and then right on to Alfred St. We took this route so we could make a stop at the Biddeford Police Dept. for a bathroom and water stop. I also took the opportunity to make a call to the Golden Rooster Restaurant on Rt. 1 in Saco and placed a breakfast to go order ... was waiting for me when I arrived!

I gobbled up my egg sandwich as we continued on to Thornton Academy and joined the newest off-road section of the ET. So nice ... I remember when I used to do this run and had to travel down Beach St. and across Old Orchard Rd. We didn't see anyone on this section but it was Sunday morning and as I mentioned before ... cold.

by Jeanne Peckiconis

Continuing off-road over the Scarborough Marsh ... we ran into several hardy folks out walking with friends and furry ones. Many commenting on the sunny but cold day ... all enjoying a great place to walk. We encouraged ETA donations to several of them.



Photo by Jim Bucar

So ... after our wonderful off-road experience, we headed back to the pavement. On our way down Highland Rd., the Greenhouses were open for the last day of the season ... for us, that meant SNACKS and another water fill up. We did a little stretching in the warm building, ate our goodies and ventured back out to make take on our last stretch of the journey. By the time we reached the ball fields, we were definitely getting a little tired but knew the end was near. We wound along on the bike paths and ended up at the bottom of the bridge where a friend picked us up at the shopping center. We stopped in Portland for a big lunch and headed home.

I guess the calculations put us at doing 26 miles give or take ... always a wonderful trip! I imagine when Spring comes and I do this again, I will see many more folks enjoying themselves along the trail. Hey ... Spring is almost here!!!

Thanks again to the folks involved with the ETA ... I, for one, have and will continue to enjoy the progress.



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Welcome to New and Renewing ETA Members

Brenda Austin
Edmund Claxton, Jr.
Greg Dumas
Nicholas Fowler
Ben Litchfield
Gail Miller
Margot & Roger Milliken
Robert Nolan
Roger Normand
Ed & Cathy Peterson
Brent Bell & Beth Potier
Bonnie Schucker
Philip Thompson
Randy Wetzel
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The Eastern Trail

Kittery



Eliot



South Berwick



North Berwick



Wells



Kennebunk



Arundel



Biddeford



Saco



Old Orchard Beach



Scarborough



South Portland

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Casual Tours *by Jim Bucar*

It has become a normal expectation that as soon as a new off-road trail section opens, users of all ages, methods of locomotion, and varying purposes will populate it in great numbers. That phenomenon is, by itself, gratifying. However, we have discovered that they will also turn out for slightly more formal and organized chances to perambulate the miles. Such has been the experience of volunteer guides even through the (admittedly mild) winter months. Joe Yuhas, John Andrews, Carole Brush, and Jim Bucar have led moonlight and starlight walks on Scarborough, Biddeford-Arundel, and Saco-OOB sections of the trail. In the last two months, over 50 people of varying ages have enjoyed moonlit trails almost entirely clear of snow. Such walks will continue monthly. In March, the normally scheduled walks will be supplemented by three events specially offered during the Great Maine Outdoor Weekend, March 2-



Photos by Jim Bucar

4. Joe Yuhas, one of ETA's most dependable and active walk guides, confesses that "the trail walks are a great way to reconnect to that part of my life" when he was a park naturalist. On the walks he leads, Joe will throw in commentaries "on the ETA, the Old Eastern Railroad, some local ecology, and a bit about the original stands of White Pines and their importance to . . . Maine's shipbuilding history during the age of sail." Joe's and the other walks usually cover 2 to 8 miles; length and direction are determined by whoever shows up. Look for scheduled walks on the ETA website calendar and on the ETA Facebook page. Great Maine Outdoor Weekend plans a similar weekend series sometime this September. Look for information on their website.



Before the Eastern Trail - A Bit of Local History

by Jim Bucar

New Englanders, residing as they do in one of the oldest settled regions of the United States, tend to be aware of the history that surrounds them — for example, the Indian massacres in Scarborough during the 1670's that gave Massacre Pond its name. Some savvy Eastern Trail users know much of the recent history of the areas the trail passes over and through. But there is more available, much of it a fascinating microcosm of the history of American transportation. Thanks to history buffs like ETA Trustees Tom Daley and Bob LaNigra, and Frank Hodgdon of the Scarborough Historical Society, we can look into those eras that preceded — and prepared the way for — the Eastern Trail.

Travelers on the trail from Bug Light, across Scarborough Marsh, and into Old Orchard Beach are often covering the pathways that horse-drawn carriages, trains, and trolleys took two centuries ago from Portland to those extremely popular vacation spots. Here's what the history looked like. It is a somewhat tangled web of competing, sometimes connecting and overlapping railroad companies. This account will concentrate on the Scarborough and Old Orchard Beach lines and branches.

1841-1842: Construction of the Portland,

Saco and Portsmouth RR Line, the first railway from southern Maine to Boston. Its tracks ran from a station on Commercial St. in Portland, across the Fore River to South Portland, then to Scarborough, Saco, and finally to North Berwick, where it connected to the Boston and Maine railway.

1872: The Eastern Railroad bought out the Portland, Saco and Portsmouth RR Line.

1901: After electrified trolleys arrived in Portland in 1895, The Portland Electric Railroad Company built a trolley line to connect with the Biddeford and Saco Railroad Company, thereby giving tourists arriving in Portland (many from Canada) direct access to "the Grand Beach at Old Orchard," a very popular summer destination.

The trolley line followed Route 1 to a car barn at Dunstan Corner, which housed four to six trolleys that began the day's runs to Portland, Saco, and Old Orchard Beach. (The generator house next to the car barn now houses the Scarborough Historical Society.) In its peak years, the trolley ran "with amazing frequency": at thirty-minute intervals from 5:45 am until late

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Before the Eastern Trail

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at night. Of most interest, however, for the historically inclined, a spur made a left turn off the main line at Dunstan Corner, down Old Blue Point Road to Portland Avenue through Milliken's Mills into the shorefront hotels in Old Orchard Beach.

To make that run, the trolley cars — mostly open during the summers — had to climb the "famous iron S trestle," which carried the cars over both Stuart's Brook and the Eastern RR tracks. The 700-foot trestle, or viaduct, was an engineering marvel of its day. If it still existed, we would be walking or biking on the Eastern Trail directly under it. You can find its location on the hand-drawn map below, about 350 feet west of Old Blue Point Road. In addition, a station was located at the intersection of Old Blue Point and Millikin Mills roads, very near where the present Eastern Trail makes its

intersection.

However, within thirty years, the very American infatuation with the automobile meant that the electrified trolley went the same way as its horse-drawn predecessor: into the history books, dependent on occasional resurrection in print and photographs to keep its memory alive.



Trestle, looking at curve toward OOB



Colorized Postcard showing open trolley on the S trestle



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Texas Instruments
Walmart

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About the ETA

We are citizens of southern Maine, hikers, bikers, X-country skiers, birders, and other outdoor enthusiasts, dedicated to creating, enjoying and maintaining the Eastern Trail.

The ET will be a four-season trail suitable for both transportation and recreation. It will connect Casco Bay in South Portland with Kittery on the NH border and the ten other communities in between.

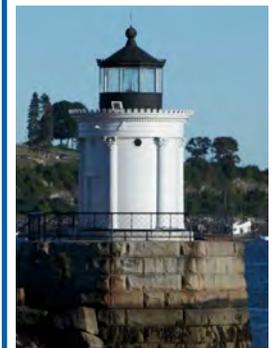


Photo by Jim Bucar

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How to Keep Up-to-date about the Eastern Trail and ETA

Read the twice-yearly newsletters.

Click over to the new ETA website.

Try us on Facebook for the quickest access to the latest news (events, trail issues, etc.)

New ETA Website

As of January, thanks to the dedicated effort of volunteer Larry Glantz, the ETA is presenting itself in a wholly new, integrated, and easily navigable website. It keeps you informed with news flashes and releases, provides access to photo albums and event calendars, and allows you to join the ETA or download maps and guides. Larry continues to refine the site by responding to viewer suggestions.

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News Briefs and Info *by Jim Bucar*

Maine Bike Commuting Boom

The Bicycle Coalition of Maine, quoting from a report from the Alliance for Biking and Walking, reports that between 1990 and 2009, the number of Mainers using bikes to commute to work rose by 120%, almost doubling the national average! That's a remarkable statistic, given that more urbanized populations might expect to report more pedaling commuters than Maine, but recent additions of ET off-road trail miles certainly will lure more commuter traffic.

ET's John Andrews Reaps Awards

Our own John Andrews, ETA's founder and President Emeritus, continued to reap honors and recognition. First, January 19, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine cited his work with ETA "to improve bicycling in Maine" as a



Photo by Carole Brush

reason to present John with one of its annual Henry Faust Leadership Award. Then, on January 24 the Biddeford-Saco Chamber of Commerce gave John its most coveted award, named for Bill Kany, who himself lauded John and presented him with an original artwork representing elements of the Eastern Trail.

Portsmouth-Kittery Rights of Passage?

With the demolition of the Memorial Bridge linking Maine and New Hampshire, the only legal means of crossing the Piscataqua is gone.



Photo by Jim Bucar

Recent attempts to persuade Maine DOT to remark the Sarah Long Bridge for temporary safe cycling traffic during the construction period of a new bridge have, alas, been stymied by the discovery of safety hazards on that bridge. Therefore, bikers will have to rely on a shuttle

van service supported by the two states; it will cross the river each way hourly, from 5:00 am to 1:00 am, and carry 12 passengers and 7 bikes each trip. During the busier summer months, MDOT promises to add shuttles if demand rises, and will continue to look for solutions to the hazards that prevent cycle traffic on the Sarah Long Bridge.

ETA Reps Petition Senators

Responding to what has devolved into a periodic threat to Bike-Ped funding, three ETA representatives and two members of Biddeford's Community Bicycle Center spent time at the local offices of Senators Snow and Collins to urge them to vote for the Cardin-Cochran amendment to preserve local governments' ability to apply for bike-ped funds. And the U.S. House has plans to strike *all* bike-ped funds from the annual transportation budget. Please keep informed of latest developments and petition your U.S. representatives and senators.

New Trail Guides!!

After months of design, preparation, multiple revisions, and printing by J.S. McCarthy, the new ET Trail Guide has been delivered. It consists of 28 weather-resistant 8.5"x5" spiral-bound pages full of trail scenes, detailed color maps, and meticulous cue sheets. You will find it easy to mount on a handlebar bag to guide your travels. Although the normal retail price is \$10., ETA members will receive it free as part of this ETA Newsletter mailing. The Guide is also available for printing as free download from the ET website.



Links to articles and sites mentioned in this newsletter:

New Eastern Trail website:

www.easterntail.org

Bicycle Coalition of Maine article on increased bike commuting:

www.bikemaine.org/news-room/media-releases/2012-benchmarking-report

Cabot Creamery Tour:

www.cabotcommunitytour.com

All references to East Coast Greenway Alliance: www.greenway.com

Maine DOT, bike-ped information:

www.maine.gov/mdot/opt/bicycle-transportation.php

Maine Bike Rally:

www.mainebikerally.org

Great Maine Outdoor Weekend:

greatmaineoutdoorweekend.org/

Scarborough Historical Society

www.scarboroughmaine.com/historical/