

# EASTERN TRAIL MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

TAD REDWAY, PRESIDENT ETMD

In the last several years the Eastern Trail Management District (ETMD) has been setting a blistering pace building over 15 miles of new off-road trails, pushing for bike/pedestrian facilities on the Memorial Bridge, and securing new grants for kiosks, benches, and pedestrian facilities along the Trail. This past fiscal year has witnessed a lull in the construction frenzy, as MDOT limited its bike/pedestrian funding to focus on shovel ready construction projects.

In the face of this lull, the ETMD has not been letting any grass grow under its feet. Rather the organization has been very active in the following endeavors:

- ETMD has continued to work with the Town of Scarborough and City of South Portland and its \$150,000 TE grant to bridge the gap between the South Portland and Scarborough trail. This critical link is essential so that Arundel walkers and cyclists can access the off-road trail all the way to Casco Bay. At several key junctures, ETMD has helped broker solutions to project impasses. Part of this critical link has already received funding from PACTS and both municipalities have just applied for TIGER grant funds to complete the other portions.
- ETMD is currently renegotiating the Co-Location easement agreement with Unitil Energy for future trail development on the entire gas line corridor rather than via the current piecemeal arrangement. Not only will this arrangement provide future pre-

dictability in trail expansion but will continue to build a positive and mutually productive relationship with the host utility.

- MDOT's refusal to fund design projects during the last grant cycle has prompted some creative solutions to a fiscal and logistical problem. ETMD and the Towns of Wells and Kennebunkport are negotiating with Unitol to permit in-house design and municipal construction of future trail extensions. This policy shift would dramatically reduce trail design and construction costs and enable qualified municipal Public Works departments to build new Trail sections without being hostage to MDOT funding.
- ETMD has long advocated the construction of parking lots and sidewalks to the Limerick Road trailhead of the Eastern Trail. This year, the Arundel Selectmen approved the construction of on-road parking spaces at the Limerick Road in order to improve townspeople's access and safety. Both the ETMD and the Eastern Trail Alliance have offered a \$1,500 grant to the Town to help defray some of the costs of paving these parking spaces at a future date.
- Over the past year, ETMD has embarked on an aggressive campaign to recruit back those disillusioned towns that left the ETMD because they had yet to see the Trail built within their borders. The Town of Wells has returned to the fold, and for the first time in years, ETMD funding has been on the Warrant in the Towns of Eliot and North Berwick. Restoring ETMD membership to full strength not only insures completion of the Trail but also will reduce membership dues for Arundel and the other members.
- ETMD staff coordinated over 16 public events on the Trail ranging from charity fundraising walks, to a commercial Half Marathon, and the *REV 3 Iron Man*

*Triathlon.* Fees from these events offset ETMD administrative costs and have the potential to provide a revenue source as the Trail expands. The Arundel Recreation Department is now sponsoring events on the Eastern Trail as well.

As each section is completed, the popularity and reputation of the Eastern Trail grows. MDOT personnel have dubbed the ET as the most significant pedestrian bike path in Maine, while the national organization, East Coast Greenway, has called the ET one of the most beautiful sections of the 1500 mile Calais to Key West corridor. For Arundel businesses, the addition of each new section connecting to the Arundel ET, increases the opportunity to capture more of the passing recreational and service market. For the Arundel resident, each new section means that there are greater opportunities for their families to enjoy longer range or more varied walks, cycling or horse treks. Some residents are using the ET to commute to work, while others discover that proximity to the ET increases the market value of their property.

For more information about the Eastern Trail and the ETMD go to [www.eastertrail.org](http://www.eastertrail.org) or call 207 284-9260. Interactive trail maps are available at [www.ETmap.org](http://www.ETmap.org).