

## Eastern Trail Management District Report



After five years of incessant construction, 2014-2015 proved to be a year in which ETMD had to grapple with evaporating funds for bike/pedestrian projects. Funding for repair work also became scarce during this dry season both in Augusta and Washington. In spite of these setbacks, the ETMD has not been twiddling its thumbs. Rather the organization has been very active in the following endeavors:

- ETMD continues to negotiate a Co-Location easement agreement with Unitil Energy not only for the future sections of the Trail but for the existing trail easement including the section that runs through Arundel. If Arundel businesses are to realize maximum benefit from the Trail, it is critical that the connections to New Hampshire and the East Coast Greenway are completed. In addition the ETMD is also negotiating on Arundel's behalf so the Town is not overburdened by Unitil requirements.
- 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. ETMD has continued to broker solutions to project impasses. At this point the connection between South Portland and Scarborough is solidified, leaving only the bridge over the PanAm rail line as the final hurdle in the completed connection to Arundel.
- This year, the ETMD /ETA completed an economic impact analysis of the Eastern Trail and its current and potential

effect on the on the southern Maine economy. Using both user survey results and regional economic data, the study provides valuable insights in how the Eastern Trail is not just a recreational resource but an economic engine that can contribute significantly to the local businesses of its member communities. To read the report go to : <http://www.eastertrail.org/documents/ETEconomicImpactStudy2014.pdf>

- ETMD staff coordinated over 18 public events of 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.
- The Executive Director, Carole Brush has continued to pull yeoman duty in keeping the administrative and public relations gears of the Eastern Trail running smoothly. Between responding to a daily barrage of user questions, fielding complaints, notifying members of reported downed trees and trail damage, developing and distributing maps and promotional materials at the Trail kiosks (including the Arundel kiosk) and Town Halls, running interference with Unitil, coordinating multiple events and fundraising efforts of the Trail, serving as the Clerk of the Works on construction jobs, and managing the finances and reporting responsibilities, Carole shoulders responsibilities that any member community would have to hire a full-time person to manage. And yet Carole serves as a part-time employee for the ETMD and the ETA.
- ETMD and the Towns of Wells and Kennebunkport have successfully negotiated with Unitil 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.

- 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 returned to the fold last year and has pledged to remain. South Berwick returned this year. ETMD funding has been added to the Warrant in the Town 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.

As each section is completed, the popularity and reputation of the Eastern Trail grows. Maine Department of Transportation has classified the ET as pedestrian bike path of Statewide significance, 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 or 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) .

Respectfully submitted,  
Tad Redway, *President, and Arundel Representative*  
Eastern Trail Management District

