



# Kennebec Messalonskee TRAILBLAZER

Spring 2006

## It's happening this summer in Oakland!

### Blazings....

**Thomas College** was awarded \$29,000 by the State Recreational Trails Fund to construct a one mile trail around the campus. This was supplemented by \$5,000 awarded by LL Bean to KM Trails, which will be used as matching funds.

The **Maine Conservation Corps** is so fully booked that they cannot build the Thomas College trail this year, though they have it on the calendar for construction in 2007. Efforts are still being made to involve Americorps to do some preliminary clearing this summer. The trail, once built, will offer spectacular views of the confluence of Messalonskee Stream with the Kennebec River.

Continued on page 2

It looks like the development of the Messalonskee Stream Trail in Oakland is on track for this summer. Plans call for the Maine Conservation Corps to provide the muscle and expertise for the actual construction of the walking trail, which will meander along the east side of the Messalonskee Stream from Kennedy Memorial Drive to the Rice Rips Road. The twelve week project should start around June 1.

Hikers will find the trail to be similar to parts of the Appalachian Trail in that it will provide access to what is basically an undeveloped area with views of the stream and the wooded areas surrounding it. Walkers will also get the



Messalonskee Stream Trail vista earlier this year

chance to see some of the historic sites where the first electric power development in central Maine took place.

It is hoped that construction of this pathway will eventually lead to connection with segments of the

Kennebec Messalonskee Trail network offering opportunities for extended trail walks through neighboring communities. For more information on the new trail, please contact the Oakland Recreation Department at the

### KMT held its Annual Meeting at KVCC

A group of thirty-six enthusiastic people attended the KMTrails Annual Meeting at KVCC on April 19. Highlights included President Peter Garrett's annual State of the Trails report, detailing our construction progress throughout the five-town area in which we are building. He also told of new grants received and applied for, and filled in the crowd on where construction will be taking place this year. The content of his speech will be posted at [www.kmtrails.org](http://www.kmtrails.org).

Board member Tom McCowan presented KMTrails' new committee structure to the audience, calling for people interested in specific tasks to sign up for the appropriate committees.

Guest speaker Alix Hopkins, first executive director of Portland Trails, gave an encouraging and inspiring presentation based upon her book *Groundswell: Stories of Saving Places, Finding Community*. Her presentation of several successful projects, similar to ours, demonstrated how people persevere in bettering their community despite sometimes daunting odds. Compared to some of Alix's examples, our project seems quite manageable.

The meeting concluded with a panel discussion regarding trails and a healthy community, and the election of the new members of the Board of Directors.

#### KMTrails Mission:

Our mission is to promote, create, and help maintain recreation and fitness trails along our waterways connecting the communities of Waterville, Winslow, Benton, Fairfield, and Oakland.

## Trails and landowner liability

By Tom McCowan

Every time KMTrails approaches a property owner about placing a trail on their property, they naturally have a few concerns. One of them is whether allowing trails access increases the chances of being liable for injuries incurred by a trail builder or trail user. In short, the answer is no, thanks to a Maine law that protects landowners from such claims.

The statute itself can be found on the Maine legislature's website at <http://janus.state.me.us/legis/statutes/14/title14sec159-a.html>. Additionally, a great explanation of the law can be found at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife at: <http://www.maine.gov/ifw/aboutus/landownerrelations/landownerliability.htm>.

Generally, the law limits any duty of a landowner to make the land safe for users, or to warn of potential hazards. It also specifically protects the landowner where they give permission to others, such as KMTrails, to develop recreational uses of the property. Finally, if a landowner is sued and is found not liable, the unsuccessful plaintiff must pay the landowner's attorneys' fees.

This statute, adopted in 1979, reflects Maine's long history of public use of private land, protecting property owners who wish to share their land for the public good. KMTrails recently assisted in passing legislation adding language to the statute clarifying that railroad and utility corridors are included in the kinds of property protected, in order to help our frequent trails partners, like Central Maine Power and local railroads.

### More Blazings....

(continued from page 1)

**KM Trails was awarded \$3,864 by the State Recreational Trails Fund** to design and install signs along the Rotary Centennial Trail with 5th and 6th grade students at Benton Elementary School. That money will be matched by KMTrails funds. Signs will mostly focus on natural history (eagles, beavers, etc) and human history (Benedict Arnold, railroading, etc) that is of special interest along that trail segment.

In July 2006 KM Trails and the City intend to submit a grant application to Maine DOT for funding of a **pedestrian trail to connect the renovated Hathaway building with downtown**. The trail will go under the Waterville-Winslow bridge. Such a connection is called for in the plans for the Hathaway renovation.

Walk to shop your groceries and support the local economy: new **Farmers' Market**, Thursdays 9am - 6pm on the concourse, corner of Main/Appleton Streets, Downtown Waterville

## Join the fun on National Trails Day June 3, 2006

Everyone is invited to the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual National Trails Day Walk on Saturday June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006. The walk will begin at the Mill Island Park in Fairfield at 9:00 AM. Registration for the walk will begin at 8:00 AM. Registration is free. Everyone who registers will be eligible for prize drawings.

This year Kennebec Messalonskee Trails in cooperation with Fairfield Healthy Communities will start the National Trails Day festivities with the ribbon cutting official opening of the Rotary Centennial Trail. The trail is designated as part of the East Coast Greenway, which is a 2,900 mile off-road trail that links all the major cities of the eastern seaboard.

After the opening ceremonies at the Mill Island Park, the participants will walk ¼ mile to the Rotary Centennial Trail trailhead in Benton. The trail follows an old rail bed with beautiful scenery, woods and views of the Kennebec River for 1.9 miles. The trail ends at a scenic resting place high over the river, the former east landing of a long-gone railroad bridge. Participants can choose to continue to walk 2 miles to Head of Falls in Waterville or retrace their walk back to Mill Island Park. There will be a bus at Head of Falls to return the hikers to the Park.

At the Park health information on sun safety, West Nile Virus and Lyme disease as well as local walking maps will be distributed. There will be refreshments and snacks for all.

Many organizations have joined together which should make this one of the best National Trails Day ever!...

#### **Inland Hospital -**

the walk marks the finale of their Move and Improve program

#### **Healthy Maine Walks -**

will conduct a 20 minute walk on the Mill Island Trail

#### **Brain Injury Association -**

giving away bike helmets and promoting bike safety

#### **Maine Governor's Council of Physical Fitness, Sports, Health and Wellness in cooperation with Excel Sports -**

will offer clinics on Nordic Walking

#### **Kennebec Valley Community College -**

the walk will be the final event for their 10,000 mile walking club

#### **Greater Waterville Healthy Maine Partnership -**

will distribute nutrition information

#### **Mid Maine Homeless Shelter**

#### **and Humane Society Waterville Area -**

will be conduct their annual fundraising walk-a-thons

Consider KMTrails for your  
2006 planned giving!





## Health and Trails

### A Message from President Peter Garrett

Anthem BC/BS and MaineHealth should know should know a thing or two about how health care costs relate to physical fitness. A recent study of theirs found that **physical inactivity and excess weight are costing Maine's economy over \$2 billion** in avoidable medical and worker's compensation costs and lost productivity each year. That's equivalent to about 1/3 of the State's entire annual budget!

The study suggests that without changes in lifestyle, the costs are likely to get worse. Bill Caron, President of MaineHealth says: "It is clear that the impact of this tragic trend towards obesity and sedentary lifestyles goes well beyond health care expenses. Our mission is focused on healthy communities, and this analysis confirms that we are on the right track with our initiatives, but there is much more to be done."

We concur. Much more needs to be done, and we are doing it in the part of the State we call home. The mission of Kennebec Messalonskee Trails is to contribute to healthy and active communities, and we can't think of a better way of doing that than having accessible, attractive places for people to walk, run, bike and hike right close to where we live. What more beautiful place is there to be than along our riversides? That is where we are building a connected set of wide, well-designed, well-tended trails 24 miles long. We are also focusing on having our communities become more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

**Our health community is joining us in our efforts so that more people get out and about.** For instance, Inland Hospital's Move and Improve and MaineGeneral Hospital's MoveMore wellness programs are gaining participants every day.

Stacy Jochem, currently on staff with the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Sports, Health, and Wellness ("Maine in Motion" for short), lives in Waterville and gives us lots of support. She's teaming with Cathi Lee, our local you-can-get-past-obesity heroine, to plan monthly public walks around various trail routes throughout the community. Our Annual Meeting this year had a panel discussion on Trails and Health. The next step is to get doctors involved so that they prescribe physical activity.

But there is more to these economic results than meets the eye. Anthem BC/BS is considering reducing premiums for those who can document physical activity. They will probably do so through the source of most health care dollars, namely employers and employees. So how does your workday look? Does it include exercise? Maybe a trail walk is something for you to get involved in...

Then there is the funding of trail construction. If inactivity costs us so much, then why not put money into building trails and making our communities friendlier to pedestrians and cyclists? That is our healthy mission.

### A SHORT HISTORY

**1996**

*Idea of riverside trails floated at REM's Community Catalyst.*

**1999**

*Waterville Rotary Community Project.*

**2000**

*Kennebec River Trail Committee formed.*

**2001**

*Applied for feasibility funding.*

**2002**

*Scope of project expanded to 18 miles of trails.*

**2002**

*Incorporated as Kennebec Messalonskee Trails.*

**2003**

*Feasibility Study complete, Phase 1 and 2.*

**2004**

*Trail Construction begins on North Street Recreational Area, Benton-Winslow rail bed and South End Island.*

**2005**

*Rotary Centennial Trail from Benton to Winslow completed!!*

# Kennebec Messalonskee Trails

PRESORT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit # 26  
Waterville, ME



P.O.Box 2388  
Waterville, ME 04901

Phone: 207-873-6443  
E-mail: [info@kmtrails.org](mailto:info@kmtrails.org)

**Upcoming Events.....**  
**May 20** Inland Hospital Women Wellness Event at the Waterville Alford Center 9am—1pm  
**June 3** National Trails Day activities (see article or [www.kmtrails.org](http://www.kmtrails.org))



## Officers

President: Peter Garrett  
Treasurer: Mike Gallagher  
Secretary: Eliza Mathias

## Board of Directors

Dan Beaulieu  
Rene Burdet  
Marilyn Canavan  
Denise Delorie  
Shannon Haines  
Elizabeth Holland  
Tom McCowan  
Pete Phair  
Jonathan Rogers  
Jim Toner



## Want to Help? Join a committee!

Let's face it. KMTrails' all-volunteer Board of Directors has all they can handle. We need your help by serving on a committee. Many committees meet once a month. Some are seasonal. Some are called upon on an as needed basis. Basically, we need people with talents in particular areas to do some things the Board can't. If you want to make a difference in Greater Waterville, contact us about joining one of these committees:

### Fundraising and Budget

From fundraising events like National Trails Day to the possibility of a capital campaign, and grant applications, we need people with experience at raising funds to help us find the resources to build this network.

### Publicity

Generating this newsletter, maintaining the website, merchandising, and getting the word out - help us project our image.

### Maintenance

Well, now that we've got some actual trails, we need people to monitor them, report problems, and sometimes, pick up a rake, shovel, chainsaw, or post-hole digger to keep our trails beautiful, even as we keep building. Think something's wrong with the trails? Help us fix it!


### Membership

Sign up new members, keep records organized, develop new benefits of membership, and handle correspondence.

### National Trails Day

It's our biggest event of the year and we want to make it bigger.

So whether you love to be outdoors, or you're happier at a desk, we welcome your skills and talents.

 We are a dynamic group with momentum. Show us your support by becoming a member! All contributions are tax-deductible.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\$25 - Membership and Sponsor One Foot of Trail

\$100 - A Long Stride

\$250 - Leaps & Bounds


\$1,000 - Going the Extra Mile

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

In-Kind (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to *Kennebec Messalonskee Trails*

Donations may be sent to:  
KMTrails, P.O. Box 2388, Waterville, ME 04903



Visit our website: [www.KMTrails.org](http://www.KMTrails.org)