

ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008

For the East Hampton Trails Preservation Society, the year ending on April 30, 2008 was busy and largely successful.

The highlight of the year came in December with the opening of the Springs Amagansett Trail. After years of negotiation between VP of Trails Planning Gene Makl and the Town Board, the plan was finally approved, and the new parts of the trail cut and blazed in November. The brief ceremony on opening day, Dec 2, was attended by 75 well wishes, including Councilwoman Deb Foster (who first envisioned the trail) and State Assemblyman Fred Thiele Jr, and received good press coverage. More than 100 hikers participated in the two inaugural hikes, one starting in Springs and one in Amagansett.

These were just two of the 141 events held this year (hikes, bike rides, and kayak outings). Though there were many more hikes this year than usual, overall attendance was down about 200 from last year, but still impressive at 1,841. We look for an increase next year, with special programs such as the 100 Mile Club for long-distance "longshanks" hikers, more shorter hikes for "shortshanks" hikers, and the usual variety of mid-length hikes that also attract walkers from both special groups.

While participation was down, there was an increase in support. Membership at the organization reached a high of 632 at the beginning of April. Many members sent additional donations, so that the contribution line of our budget swelled to an unprecedented \$2,083. It is clear that the Trails Society is being recognized for our commitment to open space and to maintaining trails so that they can be safely used by all who enjoy and benefit from a walk in the woods.

This work is done by the volunteers in the Trails Maintenance Committee. Under VP of Trails Maintenance Bill Nicholas, the crew did their usual sterling job of clearing trails and keeping them free of impediments. To help them in their efforts, we purchased a new "DR" power cutter to replace the clumsy and hard to handle old machine. In addition to trails cutting, clearing, and blazing, the maintenance crew harvested a number of Black Locust logs at the old brush dump on Bull Path, some of which were used to create a rustic staircase down a slope on the Springs Amagansett Trail. The wood is also being used to make signposts to install at points where trails converge or at turns that are not obvious.

In addition to signing up new members, the Member Services committee continued to offer for sale items that enhance the hiking experience: maps, trails guidebooks, and this year, newly designed caps in two different styles. Sales of these items generated over \$1,200 and even more in good will revenue. Recognizing that the committee is on a par with others that are headed by VPs, we decided this year to create a new board position, VP of Member Services. This change called for a revision in the By-Laws, which was approved by the members. The new By-Laws are now posted on our website, [ehtps.org](https://www.ehtps.org).

In March, we participated in a Task Force formed by Assemblyman Thiele to make recommendations for clarifying some ambiguous terms in the Community Preservation Fund law on the 10th anniversary of its enactment. Rick Whalen served as our representative on the Task Force, which reported its recommendations at a meeting in early April. State Senator Ken LaValle, Assemblyman Thiele, and Assemblyman Mark Alessi of the North Fork said they would review the recommendations carefully before deciding on the new wording. The final revision will go before the state legislature for approval later this year or next year.

On the local CPF front, we recommended to the CPF committee and Town Board the purchase of several parcels that have significant opportunities for trails enhancement. Of these, the Town Board passed on one due to zoning complications and is yet to respond to the others. We will continue to press for these parcels in the coming months.

Another issue that requires attention is the reemergence of ATVs on our trails, a problem for many years, but now of immediate concern. The damage to trails in some areas, especially Miller's Ground, has become critical. We are making a concerted effort to bring the seriousness of the situation to the Town's attention; an ad-hoc committee is working on a plan for mitigating ATV damage to be presented to the Town Board.

At the beginning my second year as president, I realize more than ever how important our work is. I thank all of you – officers, committee members, trail adopters, those who attend the monthly meetings – for volunteering your time and expertise to the preservation of not only land, but a way of life.

Eva Moore
President