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**MAINE'S EASTERN TRAIL SELECTED AS ONE OF THE NATION'S BEST RAIL-TRAILS**

*The popular Maine trail to join elite group as 36th inductee in Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's national Rail-Trail Hall of Fame*

**WASHINGTON**—Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), the nation's largest trails organization, today announced that Maine's [Eastern Trail](#) would join its Rail-Trail Hall of Fame—an exemplary group of rail-trails nationwide celebrated for the social, economic and quality-of-life value they bring to the communities they serve.

“The Eastern Trail is an increasingly special place in southern coastal Maine,” said Eric Wright, Eastern Trail Alliance’s president. “Since the trail’s inception over 20 years ago, it captures Maine’s maritime history, the state’s largest salt marsh conservation area and the miles of tree-lined suburban and rural landscapes along the former Eastern Railroad connecting Boston to Maine. And we are not done yet, as we work on significant trail-building initiatives to extend the Eastern Trail to the New Hampshire border.”

The developing 65-mile trail, which welcomes 250,000 people each year along Southern Maine’s coastline and dense forests, is critical to two developing interstate trail networks: the 3,000-mile [East Coast Greenway](#) that will connect trails from Maine to Florida and the [New England Rail-Trail Network](#), which aims to unite the region’s six states—Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut—by multiuse trail. Running from South Portland to the New Hampshire border, more than 24 miles of the Eastern Trail are complete. Sixteen additional miles are under construction, 11 miles of which are being advanced with the support of \$700,000 in federal funding received in May 2022.

“Maine’s Eastern Trail is an example of the type of walking and biking infrastructure that can serve as a tourism destination and a mobility hub for the region,” said Ryan Chao, RTC’s president. “The completion of this trail is being accelerated with the support of federal, state, local and private funding, positioning it as more than a destination. This trail is an inspiration. It demonstrates how a long-distance trail can serve as the foundation for a regional trail network that connects people and places, providing safe and accessible transportation options, economic opportunity and a boon for everyone’s quality of life.”

A recent [economic impact study](#) of the Eastern Trail showed that the trail delivers \$44.6 million in annual economic benefits and supports 364 jobs across the state. Once the 16 miles of trail under construction are completed, the trail is projected to bring an additional \$5.9 million in earnings and sales.

"We are beyond excited for the Eastern Trail's well-earned RTC Hall of Fame induction", said Jean Sideris, executive director of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine. "The Eastern Trail is the epitome of what an outstanding trail should look like—something that links communities together, is accessible for riders of all abilities, suitable for various types of bikes, and packed with picture-perfect scenery that highlights some of the best parts of our beautiful state. Congratulations to the Eastern Trail and our friends at the Eastern Trail Alliance!"

The Hall of Fame inductee is selected during a public vote each year, which ran from Jul. 22 to Aug. 2. The Eastern Trail was nominated alongside Alaska's Tony Knowles Coastal Trail and Missouri's Grant's Trail. Hall of Fame trails are recognized for outstanding scenic value, use, amenities, historical significance and community value. Learn more about the Rail-Trail Hall of Fame at [railstotrails.org/halloffame](http://railstotrails.org/halloffame).

The Eastern Trail runs through charming South Portland neighborhoods and scenic coastal landscape, including a famous lighthouse called Bug Light, the more than 3,000-acre Scarborough Marsh and a 7-mile stretch of sandy beach. The original rail route was built by the Eastern Railroad in the 1840s to connect Boston to Portland. The trail is managed by the Eastern Trail Alliance and Eastern Trail Management District, a partnership dedicated to fill the trail gaps and build a fully off-street multiuse trail. Learn more about the trail at [easterntail.org](http://easterntail.org).

*Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is the nation's largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong—dedicated to building a nation connected by trails, reimagining public spaces to create safe ways for everyone to walk, bike and be active outdoors. Connect with RTC at [railstotrails.org](http://railstotrails.org) and @railstotrails on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).*