

**East Quabbin Land Trust**  
**Recreational Trails Policy**  
**April 2012**

Designated trails on properties owned by the East Quabbin Land Trust are open to the public from dawn to dusk. Single track trails are designed and constructed to invite walkers, joggers, wildlife watchers, and others interested in quiet reflection. Certain trails are open to bicyclists, equestrians, and other individuals who have the need to use electric or electronic power-driven mobility devices for locomotion. All Terrain vehicles (ATVs) and other off road vehicles are not permitted on East Quabbin Land Trust trails. Vehicular use of primitive access roads by trained staff is rare and limited to infrequent land management or emergency purposes. Pets may accompany pedestrians on trails if leashed and under the control of the owner. The safe multiple use of our trails requires the cooperation and courtesy of all visitors. We ask that visitors stay on designated trails, follow the protocol for yielding to other trail users, and watch for trail sign posts at preserves.

Most of our existing trails are narrow single tracks, with an average width of 24-36 inches. Although wheelchairs are permitted by law on all of our trails, most trails have a variety of challenging environmental conditions such as wet areas, stream crossings, rocky outcroppings, and steep slopes. Deep mud, obstacles in the trail, or physical space to reverse direction on the trail may not make a trail advisable or safe for other power driven mobility devices or wheelchairs. Recognizing the physical obstacles inherent across our preserve system, as well as the importance of providing opportunities for those with mobility assistance needs to enjoy and appreciate the outdoors, the East Quabbin Land Trust is actively working to increase accessibility on our properties, especially the Central Mass Rail Trail.

**“Single Track Trail” networks are available at:**

**Mandell Hill**, Barre Road, Hardwick

**Moose Brook Preserve**, Brook Road, Hardwick

**Patrill Hollow Preserve**, Gilbertville and Patrill Hollow Road, Hardwick

**Frohloff Farm**, Upper Church Street, Ware

**Hyde Woodlot**, Old Stagecoach Road, Ware

**Mass Central Rail Trail**

The section of the Mass Central Rail Trail running between the former New Braintree Train Station and Creamery Road is open to a wide variety of recreational users. Recreational use along this section of the rail trail includes walking, jogging, horseback riding, bicycling, nature study, and other passive recreational uses.

Individuals with limited mobility may use electric or electronic “other power-driven mobility devices” to experience the Mass Central Rail Trail provided such mobility devices do not exceed 36 inches in width, speeds over four miles per hour, and weights over 500 pounds. Visitors using other power-driven mobility devices that do not meet these specifications may request a single use exception to this policy by contacting the Executive Director of the East Quabbin Land Trust and obtaining a “single use day pass”.

Use of snowmobiles in winter on the Central Mass Rail Trail is limited by a special lease agreement between the East Quabbin Land Trust and the Ware River Snowmobile Club. This access is allowed only during appropriate snow conditions.

**The following general rules apply to all trail users:**

**ATV’s, 4-Wheelers, dirt bikes** and other gas powered motorized off-road vehicles are prohibited on all preserves, except with a special use permit from the Executive Director of the East Quabbin Land Trust.

**Camping:** Visitors are not allowed to camp on preserves except with a special use permit from the Executive Director of the East Quabbin Land Trust.

**Fires and Fireworks:** Visitors are not allowed to set fires or use fireworks on preserves.

**Firearms or Bows and Arrows:** Use of hunting weapons is not permitted at entrance, staging areas, or on trails. Possession of firearms or bows and arrows by licensed persons is only allowed during appropriate hunting seasons. Target practice is not allowed on any preserve.

**Disturbance of natural materials,** whether animal, plant, or mineral is prohibited except with written permission from the Executive Director of the East Quabbin Land Trust.

**Dogs:** Keep your dog on a leash. Please be considerate of other trail users by cleaning up after your dog. Running and training of hunting dogs is not allowed.

**Gates:** All persons operating a gate shall close the gate after passing through it.

**Geo-caching and Letter Boxing** are permitted on preserves.

**Paintball Guns** are prohibited on all preserves.

**Protect our environment:** Remember you are a steward of the trail. Carry out what you carry in and remove the trash of others. Inform the East Quabbin Land Trust of any barriers and report signs of vandalism.

**Radios and other sound broadcasting devices** should be used at lower volume levels. Please be considerate and respect the privacy of other visitors, neighbors, and wildlife whenever using a sound broadcasting device on a preserve.

**Snowmobiles** are prohibited except with a special use lease agreement with the East Quabbin Land Trust on the Mass Central Rail Trail by members of the Ware River Snowmobile Club.

**Structures:** Fabricating or placing any structures on a preserve is prohibited except with written permission from the Executive Director of the East Quabbin Land Trust.

**Trails are open from dawn to dusk. Please stay on designated trails:** There shall be no unauthorized creation of new trails on preserves.

**Trail Closures:** The East Quabbin Land Trust reserves the right to close any trail to pedestrian and/or vehicular use due to environmental degradation or hazardous trail conditions.

Information about trail closures will be posted at the site and on our web site: [www.eqlt.org](http://www.eqlt.org)

**In the Event of an Emergency:** Contact police to report a fire, or medical emergency, dial 911 on any cell phone.

**Remember the safe multiple use of our trails requires your cooperation.** Each trail user should exercise common courtesy when visiting preserves. Please check trail signs at kiosks and trail entrances. The following symbol illustrates protocol for yielding the right-of-way when cyclists, equestrians, and hikers meet on multiple use trails.



### **Protocol for Bicycle Riders**

- Know which trails are open for bicycle use. Watch for trail signposts with trail names and diamond markers.
- Always yield, pass with care and keep your speed to a slow, safe pace. Approach each bend as if someone were around the corner. Hikers and particularly horses are easily startled. Calling out or ringing a bicycle bell to get the attention of other trail users can prevent accidents. Being sensitive to how others perceive you will assure a positive image for your sport and minimize the restrictions that follow confrontations and negative encounters.
- Stay on the approved trails. Creation of new trails is prohibited except with permission of the East Quabbin Land Trust. Riding off trails or skidding down slopes damages natural resources, creates erosion and threatens other users and wildlife.
- Don't ride during periods of heavy rain or on trails where ruts are created by your wheels. Protect natural resources by honoring use restrictions placed on areas that are environmentally fragile.
- Do not build jumps and other unauthorized structures on trails.
- Be prepared for your trip. Wear a helmet at all times. The key to a successful and enjoyable ride requires knowledge of regulations, proper equipment, preparedness for the unexpected and an understanding of one's personal ability.
- Become a volunteer steward of the trail system, report any obstacles blocking the trail, and any signs of vandalism to the East Quabbin Land Trust.

## **Protocol for Equestrians**

- Know which trails are open for horseback riding. Watch for information at trail heads and EQLT web site. Stay on designated trails.
- Travel at a safe speed. Be especially careful when visibility is limited.
- Communicate. Let other trail users know if your horse is safe to pass. Ride at a pace that is comfortable and safe for everyone in your group and always announce in advance a change of gait to others in your group.
- A distance of one horse length should be maintained between animals on flat terrain; two horse lengths going uphill and three horse lengths going downhill.
- Warn others of obstacles or tricky footing and increase following distance on heavily wooded or difficult trails.
- Uphill traffic has the right of way.
- Stay alert; you can often hear others before you see them, announce yourself or otherwise make voice contact.
- Keep horses moving when defecating so the materials will biodegrade quickly.
- Stay on the trail and don't take short cuts.
- Protect our environment and don't ride in the rain. If the trail is muddy, use an alternate trail. Deep hoof ruts are difficult to repair and make the trail hazardous for other trail users.
- Riding with a companion is recommended, as well as telling someone where you're going and when you'll be back.
- Be prepared for your trip, wear a helmet at all times, have a clear understanding of your own abilities, and knowledge of the rules and regulations of the preserve.
- Wear blaze orange during the hunting season.
- Become a volunteer steward of the trail system, report any obstacles blocking the trail, and any signs of vandalism to the East Quabbin Land Trust.

## **Protocol for Hikers, Joggers, and Walkers**

- Stay on designated trails. Trails are the safest and best routes through our preserves. In an emergency situation it is easier to locate and assist a trail user on designated trails. You are less likely to disturb wildlife and avoid hazards such as ticks and poison ivy by staying on designated trails.
- Respect the privacy of neighboring landowners and stay within the boundaries of the preserve.
- Consideration of your fellow hikers and riders dictates that you not cut across switchbacks, especially in the downhill direction. In addition to erosion damage brought on by cross-cutting, there is a definite danger of dislodging rocks which might roll down on people below.
- Listen for other trail users and pass equestrians with caution. Hikers and backpackers should step to the side of the trail when meeting or being overtaken by equestrians.
- Keep your dog on a leash and under strict voice control. Please be considerate of other trail users by cleaning up after your dog.
- Be prepared for your trip, bring water and dress appropriately for outdoor activities. Wear blaze orange when visiting preserves during the hunting season.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you'll be back.
- Become a volunteer steward of the trail system. Carry out what you carry in, and pick up the trash of others along the way. Report any serious impediments blocking the trail or signs of vandalism to the East Quabbin Land Trust.

## **Protocol for Other Power Driven Mobility Devices**

- Electric and electronic power driven mobility devices may be used on designated trails of the East Quabbin Land Trust such as the Mass Central Rail Trail by those individuals with the need for such devices. Watch for information regarding which trails are open for such use at trail heads, on the EQLT web site, or by calling the office at 413 477-8229.
- Tracked vehicles are not allowed on trails due to the physical damage they may cause to trail surfaces. Mobility devices with internal combustion engines are also prohibited.
- Other Power driven mobility devices must be no greater than 36 inches in width, limited to a weight of no more than 500 pounds (including rider and cargo) to maintain safety and protect sensitive resources.
- Other Power Driven Mobility Devices must be operated at a safe speed not to exceed 4 mph.
- East Quabbin Land Trust staff and volunteers may ask a person seeking the use of a power driven mobility device on land trust property to provide credible assurance that the device is required because of the person's disability. The staff member or volunteer shall accept the presentation of a valid, state-issued disability parking placard or card, or other proof of disability as a credible assurance that the use of the device is for the person's mobility disability. In lieu of a valid placard or card, the staff member or volunteer shall accept as a credible assurance, a verbal representation that the device is being used for a mobility disability. The staff or volunteer will not ask the person using the device about the personal nature and extent of the disability.
- This is an interim policy. The East Quabbin Land Trust intends to further assess its existing trails to identify those trails best suited for use by other power driven mobility devices in accordance with the Department of Justice regulations amending the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title II Regulations, 28 CFR PART 35, Effective March 15, 2011.
- Become a volunteer steward of the trail system. Carry out what you carry in, and pick up the trash of others along the way. Report any serious impediments blocking the trail for all users, and any signs of vandalism to the East Quabbin Land Trust.