

Vermont TRAILS & GREENWAYS



Volume 4, Number 2

Spring 2001

Protect the Catamount Trail

One landowner at a time

by Ted Milks, Executive Director
www.catamounttrail.org

In North America, the Catamount Trail is unequalled. It is a free, public cross-country ski and snowshoe trail that begins at the Massachusetts border and winds its way for 300 miles through the heart of the Green Mountains, ending at the Canadian border. Along the way it connects eleven cross-country ski centers. Its uniqueness lies not only in its length, but the fact that its existence is made possible through the generous permission of over 400 private landowners whose property it crosses.

In the last five years, the number of private landowners along the trail has almost doubled. Because 180 miles of the Catamount Trail crosses private land, development pressure and changing landowners constantly put the Trail in jeopardy. Recognizing that the future existence of the Trail can only be assured by protecting the Trail corridor, the Catamount Trail Association (CTA) developed a strategic Trail Protection Program in 1998.

Thanks to a generous three-year grant by the Freeman Foundation, the CTA hired Dorothy Weinstein as Trail Protection Director. The Trail Protection Program encourages willing landowners to donate trail access easements across their property, partners with land conservation groups on projects that include the Catamount Trail within the project boundaries, and develops and implements appropriate stewardship programs.

Many trail easement opportunities will be possible only through direct purchase. In addition, each easement obtained, whether through purchase or donation, will incur associated costs, including staff time, legal expenses, and stewardship costs. In



The Catamount Trail crosses Governor Dean's property in Lowell. Above, the Governor (second from left) on the Trail in Lowell with Jan Rozendaal (left), Dorothy Weinstein and Lenore Budd (right). Photo by Ted Milks.

order to maintain these efforts, the CTA is actively pursuing funding opportunities through private and public foundations, as well as private donations.

Since the Trail Protection Program began, the CTA has successfully protected nearly 10 miles of the Trail, and support for these efforts grows daily. Recently, Governor Howard Dean gave permission for the CTA to reroute a portion of the Trail off a snowmobile route and across his property in Lowell. He has promised a trail access easement for this new section of Trail and has further supported CTA's efforts by including an appropriation in the FY 2002 state budget for the purchase of trail easements.

The CTA is committed to protecting the Catamount Trail corridor, thus assuring a special recreational resource for future generations of skiers and snowshoers. If you would like to learn more about our protection efforts or offer support, please feel free to contact the CTA at 802-864-5794, or by e-mail at ctamail@aol.com.





Grant News

The Vermont Trails and Greenways Council Newsletter

Produced by the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council with support from the Vermont Recreation Trails Fund and assistance from the National Park Service Rivers & Trails Program.

Layout by Kate Carter.

Newsletter contributions are welcome from both members and nonmembers.

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Statewide & Regional Council Members:

Appalachian Mountain Club, Catamount Trail Association, Cornwall Bicycle Club, Cross Vermont Trail Association, Essex Town Community Development Office, Friends of the West River Trail, Green Mountain Club, Mad River Path Association, Morristown Recreation Committee, National Park Service Rivers & Trails Program, Northern Forest Canoe Trail, Northern VT RC&D Council, Northwest Regional Planning Commission, Norwich Conservation Commission, Poultney Conservation Commission, Upper Valley Trails Alliance, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, VT Agency of Transportation, VT Association of Snow Travelers, VT Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation, VT Mountain Bike Advocates, VT Outdoor Guide Association, VT Youth Conservation Corps, Westmore Association Trails, Winooski Parks & Recreation Department, Winooski Valley Park District.

19 projects receive \$364,808 from the 2001 Recreation Trails Grants Forest, Parks & Recreation

In March, 2001, the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation announced the winners in this year's Vermont and National Recreation Trails Fund grants. It was a very competitive year, with 50 applications seeking funds. The awardees are:

Vermont Association of Snow Travelers

Statewide Grooming and Maintenance \$165,000

Catamount Trail Association

Lathrop Property Trail Development \$5,955

Black Falls Easement Acquisition \$10,120

Cross Vermont Trail

I-91 Underpass, Phase II \$35,880

Hartford—Quechee Gorge Visitor's Center Trail \$32,965

Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail—Enhancements \$6,125

Lake Champlain Paddler's Trail—Composting Outhouses \$10,030

Lake Champlain Land Trust—Recreation Lands Guidebook \$8,000

Rivendell School District—Cross-Rivendell Trail, Phase 1 \$21,123

Green Mountain Club

Lake Mansfield Trail Reconstruction & Improvements \$11,500

Norwich—Gile Mountain Fire Tower & Trail \$19,076

South Hero Rail Trail & Burlington Bikeways \$36,034

The Recreation Trails Grant program provides matching grants for (1) maintenance of existing recreation trails; (2) restoration of areas damaged by use of recreation trails; (3) development of trail side and trailhead facilities; (4) provision of features which facilitate access to and use of trails by persons with disabilities; (5) construction of new trails on state, municipal or private lands where a recreational need for such construction is shown; (6) preparation and printing of trail-related plans, studies, maps and other educational information and materials; (7) trail protection including fee simple or easement acquisition; and (8) purchase of hand tools for granted trail work.

The Mini Grant option (up to \$500, no match required) is a new two-year pilot project under the grant program. The awardees are:

Craftsbury Schools—Planten Preserve Trails Map & Brochure \$500

Montpelier Project AWARE—Safety Signing \$500

Morristown Recreational Trails—Signs \$500

The Nature Conservancy—Boardwalk at Bald Mountain Natural Area \$500

Northeast Kingdom Service Conservation Corps—

Gore-Bluff-Bald & Monadnock Mountain Trails Improvements \$480

White River Valley Trails Association—Trail Conservation \$500

For more information, contact Peter Strobridge at Vermont Forests, Parks and Recreation, 802-241-3646 or pstrobri@fpr.anr.state.vt.us.

National News

Three new rail-to-trail references available

Liability, sharing corridors, best practices

Rail-Trails and Liability: A primer on trail-related liability issues and risk management techniques

(Rails-to-Trails Conservancy)

For 15 years, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has been helping local trail advocates move their projects from vision to reality. Liability concerns are among the most frequently voiced issues by people who live adjacent to proposed trails. Likewise, trail managers need to be knowledgeable about trail-related liability issues. This report details the various legal mechanisms that protect both trail managers and adjacent landowners. For a free copy, go to www.trailsandgreenways.org.

Rails-With-Trails: Sharing corridors for transportation and recreation

(Rails-to-Trails Conservancy)

In many places around the country, trails are being built alongside active rail corridors; there are now 61 of these trails nationwide, encompassing 239 miles in 20 U.S. states today, with at least 20 more in the works. Rails-With-Trails have their own set of issues, and this report documents the design and operating characteristics of the 61 trails along active railroads. For a free copy, go to www.trailsandgreenways.org, or contact Hugh Morris, RTC research director, 202-331-9696, rthugh@transact.org.



Rails-With-Trails Best Practices Study

(U.S. Dept. of Transportation, FHWA, Federal Railroad Administration, Alta Transportation Consulting)

This draft report, to be finalized in September, 2001, examines the safety, design and liability issues associated with the development of Rails-With-Trails, shared-use paths located on or directly adjacent to an active railroad corridor. The draft is available online for review at www.altaplanning.com/fhwa/index.html (Adobe Acrobat required; be prepared for a slow download). For a hard copy, contact Christopher Douwes at 202-366-5013 or Christopher.douwes@fhwa.dot.gov.

Join the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council!

Now is the time to renew your membership. Or, if you have never been a member, now is the time to join. The Council needs your support! Help us shape the future of Vermont recreation. (Application form available on back page.)

We look forward to seeing you at our annual meeting:

Thursday, May 17, 2001

Green Mountain Club's Hiker Center, Waterbury Center, VT

9:30 a.m.—refreshments

10 a.m.—meeting

noon—catered lunch

2 p.m.—meeting adjourned

For more information call Ben Rose, 802-244-7037

Many thanks to Laurie Adams!

Laurie Adams had moved on to a new job as Public Transit Grants Administrator at the Vermont Agency of Transportation. Laurie provided invaluable support to the Council for many years. Her professionalism as well as personal interest and dedication were essential to the Council accomplishing many of its goals. We wish her luck in her new position. She is now at Laurie.Adams@state.vt.us. Thanks, Laurie!!

Member News

Rail Trail Challenge promotes economic benefits

By Cynthia Scott, Rail Trail Coordinator



The Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council, in cooperation with local businesses, has launched the “Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail Challenge.”

Through the Rail Trail Challenge program, trail users earn a specially-designed Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail patch and are listed as official End-to-Enders in the Rail Trail newsletter. The patch and listing are awarded when a trail user visits at least three shops, stores, and restaurants in each of five towns along the trail. The businesses sign an easy-to-use passport to verify the visit. Designed to promote the economic benefits of the Trail, the Challenge encourages trail use, supports the local economy, and helps businesses recognize trail customers. The Challenge is the brainchild of Mike Loner, the Council’s Vice President and a trail user. The Council was awarded a 2000 Vermont Recreation Trails Grant to launch the program. For more information on the program, contact Cynthia Scott, 802-933-8851.

Upcoming Grant Deadlines!

• **D.I.R.T. (Direct Impact on Rivers & Trails) Grant Program**

Supported by PowerBar, this program supports projects that protect threatened lands and rivers, preserve access to the outdoors, or restore damage to lands and waterways. Grants range from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Early June deadline. Contact DIRT Program PowerBar, Inc. (2150 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704), www.powerbar.com/whoweare/dirt.

• **American Greenways Awards / Conservation Fund**

Local, regional and statewide non-profit organizations are eligible for \$500 to \$2,500 to stimulate the planning and implementation of greenways in communities throughout America. March 1 and June 1 deadlines. Contact the American Greenways Coordinator at The Conservation Fund, (703) 525-6300 (1800 North Kent St., Suite 1120, Arlington, VA 22209), www.conservationfund.org/conservation/amgreen/index.htm.

VYCC eagerly prepares for another season

By Jenna Potash, Recruitment Coordinator



VYCC crew workers, West River Trail, Bald Mtn. Dam.

The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Vermont’s premier conservation, education, and service organization is gearing up for another exciting season. The VYCC hires over 250 corps members and 50 crew leaders to run Vermont’s State Parks and maintain Vermont’s highly used recreation trails and waterways.

State Parks Crews consist of park managers and corps members who handle park reservations, lead campfires, and maintain facilities and campgrounds. Roving, Wilderness or Community Crews consist of crew leaders and corps members who construct bridges, build new trails and maintain old ones, and improve Vermont’s watersheds.

A typical VYCC day is exciting and intense, and the work is physically demanding. Wilderness or Roving Crews begin their days with breakfast at 6:30 a.m. and end with camp activities by 10 p.m. Evenings and weekends include education opportunities such as campfires, hiking trips, presentations by foresters and naturalists, and crew games.

The VYCC is now hiring corps members (ages 16-24) and crew leaders (ages 22 and up). Most positions are residential, with room and board included, but there are also day crews in three Vermont communities. If you or someone you know is ready for a challenging experience, call today for an application! 1-800-639-8922.

Member News

58th Annual Governor's Conference on Recreation

By George Plumb

The many hats worn by people who provide parks, recreation and leisure services will be the focus of the **Annual Governor's Conference on Recreation** to be held on Tuesday, October 23rd, 2001 at the Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center in Montpelier.

Sponsored by the Vermont Recreation and Park Association, with support from the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council, the conference will feature sessions that will be of interest to town park and recreation committee and board members, trails and path committee members and volunteers, recreation, maintenance, and administrative support staff, and natural resource managers. In addition to the educational sessions there will be over 20 exhibitors related to parks and recreation and presentation of the Theresa S. Brungardt Awards for outstanding service to parks and recreation.

For information about the conference contact the Vermont Recreation and Park Association at 802-883-2313 or plumb@together.net.

1200 acres and growing

By Bev Major



Formed in 1992, the **Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association** now has over 1,100 members, protects nearly 1,200 acres, maintains six miles of trail, and works on many projects in partnership with the Putney Mountain Association. The effort started as a project to gain access to the Pinnacle, the highest peak on Windmill Mountain, in memory of Jamie Latham, who died in a boating accident. Latham loved the spot with its breathtaking views of mountains in Windham, Windsor and Bennington Counties. The Association donates development rights for every parcel it owns; when the group gets ready to buy land, it raises more money than needed for the purchase, in order to create an endowment to pay taxes on each parcel. WHPA's primary goal remains to conserve wild lands in southeastern Vermont, while creating permanent public access along a 14-mile ridgeline from Rockingham to Dummerston. For more information, contact Bev Major at 802-387-5737, rbmajor@sover.net.



Remember when? 1992. The first "Traffic Calming Workshop" that led to the building of Vermont's first roundabouts. Tony Redington was the primary mover and he brought in two experts from Florida who presented the program. Anne Lusk also played a key leadership role. For the photo, participants brought representations of various forms of transportation. Photo by George Plumb.

Bicycling and walking guide for Franklin County

By Bonnie Waninger

The **Northwest Regional Planning Commission** is pleased to announce the publication of the *Franklin County Bicycling and Walking Guide*, which highlights 10 walking tours and trails, and 13 on-road bicycle routes. Organized around themes such as "International Affairs," "Pedal Power Panoramas," and "Ship to Shore," the Guide offers a glimpse of Franklin County's rich heritage and unique culture. For copies of the Guide, call the Commission at 802-524-5958 or email nrpcvt@nrpcvt.com.

Member News

The Mad River Greenway

A case study in building a greenway, piece by piece

By Kevin Russell



More than a decade ago, a group of people in Central Vermont came together with an idea for a recreation path that would extend the length of Vermont's Mad River Valley. The path, called the Mad River Greenway, became the mission of the **Mad River Path Association (MRPA)**.

Today, the MRPA is a progressive, non-profit community organization managed by "hands-on" volunteers and professional administrators. They support community health and education, advocate for bicycle and pedestrian access, and participate in public planning and land management, while maintaining the primary goal of creating the contiguous Mad River Greenway.

On September 17, 2000 the MRPA celebrated the opening of the new Westside section of the Mad River Greenway in Waitsfield. Parallel to the Mad River, this section of trail is a seven-foot wide mowed grass pathway. It winds through wooded and open sections that afford wonderful views of the Mad River, the Valley and the Green Mountains. What makes this new section of the Mad River Greenway special is the permanent easements which allow for public access to the recreation trail. A land conservation partnership between the Mad River Path Association, Vermont Land Trust, Friends of the Mad River, the

Town of Waitsfield, and the Neill Family Farm included the purchase of a permanent easement for the seven-foot-wide recreation trail within a 50-foot-wide ecological buffer strip between cultivated land and the Mad River.

Two new sections of the Greenway currently being worked on are the Kingsbury Bridge section in Warren and the Waitsfield Village section. MRPA received a grant from the nationwide Kodak American Greenway Awards Program in Arlington, Virginia for planning the Kingsbury Bridge section. Kingsbury Bridge is an historic iron bridge that carries Route 100 over the Mad River adjacent to the Kingsbury Farm in Warren. The bridge is slated for replacement by the Agency of Transportation (AOT). MRPA participated in planning for the new bridge, and with the help of AOT's Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator Amy Bell, the new bridge design includes a pathway under the bridge span.

On the Waitsfield Village segment, MRPA has made recent progress in negotiations with critical landowners for a connection across private land. The Waitsfield Village section project includes creating a riparian buffer zone, planting trees and shrubs, and doing river bank stabilization.

To fully appreciate the idea of this continuous greenway is to understand the

larger meaning of the word "greenway." It is a recreation trail, but it is also the river, meadows, views, connecting streams, and the entire gamut of the things that are geographically bound together along its corridor. You can canoe in the greenway, soar over it, ride, hike, and ski along its recreation trail. It is the trout, the fox, the man and the cow. Besides connecting us as a community, the recreation trail performs a vital function as an ecological buffer zone between sensitive river habitat and adjoining farmland. Encouraging natural growth of the vegetation within a buffer zone of at least 50 feet, and using responsible riverbank stabilization techniques enhances the ecology of the river by improving fish habitat. Treading lightly and using methods that mitigate negative impacts to the ecology and enhance natural habitat are guiding principles in trail development.

There is currently an explosion of greenway development in America. Working with funders, community officials, government agencies, users, citizens, and landowners, the Mad River Path Association fosters a positive environment for implementing, piece by piece, one of the finest greenways in Central Vermont.

For more information contact Kevin Russell, Executive Director, PO Box 683, Waitsfield, VT, 05673 www.madriver.com/path.

Member News

VMBA gets a director

By Kate Carter, Chair

Vermont Mountain Bike Advocates, a non-profit organization founded in 1997, has hired its first executive director, Tom Yennerell of Pittsfield, Vermont. Yennerell, who has served on VMBA's board since January, 2000, has been the point-person for mountain bike trails in the Green Mountain National Forest. He owns the Pittsfield Inn on Route 100 in Pittsfield, and Escape Routes, an outdoor adventure touring company. Yennerell was Municipal Manager for the Town of West Rutland for four years, served on the Pittsfield Selectboard for six years, and chairs the Pittsfield Planning Commission. He's been an avid mountain biker for as long as he can remember.



Tom Yennerell

"Mountain biking in Vermont is at a critical point. We need someone to work on a more regular basis to help the organization grow, to raise public awareness about mountain bikers' demographics and interests, and to cultivate relations with state, federal and private land managers. As a group, we need to develop statewide mountain bike chapters, to educate mountain bikers to be responsible, environmentally sensible trail users, and to conserve and protect trails throughout Vermont for future generations," says Yennerell.

VMBA's efforts so far have focused on forming cooperative agreements with land managers to open more existing trails and logging roads to mountain bikers and to build new singletrack trails where appropriate. VMBA is presently working with the Agency of Natural Resources on long-term recreational management plans for mountain bike trails in Phen Basin, Green River Reservoir State Park, Camel's Hump State Forest, and the former Champion Lands, as well as trails in the Green Mountain National Forest. Currently, there is only one trail on state land open to mountain biking.

For more information about VMBA, visit www.vmba.org or write to PO Box 563, Waterbury, VT, 05676. Tom Yennerell can be reached at 802-746-8943, escapert@vermontel.com.

VOGA on-line trail directory

By Graydon Stevens, Director

Vermont Outdoor Guide Association (VOGA) has created an on-line trail directory at www.voga.org. You can find the list in the contents frame under "Trails and Waterways." Trail organizations and communities are invited to add their information by contacting Graydon Stevens at gray@voga.org. There is no charge for the listing and VOGA will place a link and a short description of your trail system on the site. Included are trails and organizations for biking, birding, canoeing, cross-country skiing, hiking, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and scuba diving. (Did we miss anything?) If it is possible, VOGA requests a return link to www.voga.org. For more information call 802-425-6211.



Help for your project

By Jennifer Waite, Vermont Projects Director

The National Park Service Rivers & Trails Program helps plan and implement local trail, greenway and river protection projects. The program provides NPS staff assistance to work cooperatively with local trail groups, conservation organizations, and regional and state agencies on greenways, rail-trails, and river corridors. Rivers & Trails is not a grants program, but we tailor assistance activities to meet a community's needs. These may include developing a vision and action plan for the project, building the capacity of the organization, trail planning and implementation, publications, finding project funding, and workshops. This year's Vermont projects include Lake Champlain Walkways, Wells River/Cross Vermont Trail, Poultney Educational Trails, Former Champion Lands hiking trails, and the Mount Independence NHL-accessible trail. Letters requesting assistance are due September 1. For more information, contact Jennifer Waite at 802-457-3368 ext 21, jennifer_waite@nps.gov, or visit www.nrc.nps.gov/rtca.

103 South Main St.
Building 10 South
Waterbury, VT 05671-0604



**Vermont Trails and
Greenways Council**

2001-2002 VERMONT TRAILS AND GREENWAYS COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
Membership extends annually from June 1 - May 31

NEW **OR** **RENEWAL**

Date Received/Amount _____ **Check No.** _____

ORGANIZATION NAME _____

CONTACT NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

STATE _____ **ZIP** _____

TELEPHONE _____ **FAX** _____

EMAIL _____ **WEB SITE** _____

PLEASE GIVE US A BRIEF DESCRIPTION ON YOUR ORGANIZATION _____

DO YOU OR YOUR ORGANIZATION PERFORM ON-THE-GROUND TRAIL WORK? _____

Annual membership dues:

- Commercial** \$50
- Statewide** \$30
- Regional** \$25
- Local/Community** \$20
- Individual/Friend** \$10

Please make checks payable to:
Vermont Trails and Greenways Council
103 South Main St., Building 10 South,
Waterbury, VT 05671-0604.

Questions? Call the Recreation & Trails Administrative Assistant, 802-241-3690. Thank You!