



RIDE 2018

REPORT

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RIDE

RIDE VERSION 7: ONWARD, UPWARD

Welcome to the seventh annual RIDE issue. We started publishing this mountain-bike section in 2012, when the sport's popularity was just beginning to explode. Though there was considerable local interest in mountain biking, hardly anyone would have predicted its power as an economic engine, with riders filling hotel rooms, restaurants and pubs, and with bike racks as ubiquitous in the summer as ski racks are in the winter.

Way back, Rick Sokoloff, shown in the accompanying photo, was the evangelist for the Stowe Mountain Bike Club. He and Hardy Avery and a few other hardcore mountain bike believers were doing their magic out in the woods, out of view, and then emerging to tell the world what they had wrought.

The world caught on pretty fast, and the Stowe area became a big attraction for the emerging sport of mountain biking.

The Stowe Mountain Bike Club has evolved into the Stowe Trails Partnership, one of six Vermont mountain-bike organizations that are now working together to link trail networks and expand the vision for what this sport can become.

Community's support for this sport became evident last fall, when a freak windstorm laid waste to 30 percent of the trails in Cady Hill Forest. Scores of people helped clear up hundreds of fallen trees and begin rebuilding the trails. Parts of the forest network will be open this summer. The Cady Hill



Rick Sokoloff heads into the woods.

Forest story begins on Page 5.

A new trail in Stowe this year honors the memory of Callagy Ross, an intrepid Stowe athlete who died way too young at age 23. That story begins on Page 8.

One glory of mountain biking is that anyone can do it. Rider profiles begin on 11.

A rundown on expansion plans for Vermont's mountain bike trails network begins on Page 20.

Our nation is in kind of a crazy news cycle, with a barrage of uncertainty arriving every day and putting people on edge. It's tough to check your phone while you're biking over rocks and roots; mountain biking is an opportunity to unplug and to focus on the grandeur of Vermont.

This is also a time of transition for the Stowe Trails Partnership, as Evan Chismark is leaving after two years of moving and shaking as the organization's executive director. He's not going anywhere, though; the boom in mountain biking has presented a business opportunity that Evan hopes to take advantage of with Ranch Camp — a bike shop with a taproom and food and lots of conversation. It's been a pleasure working with Evan on RIDE.

Cheers to another great mountain bike season, and we hope to see you on the trails.

— Tom Kearney, Stowe Reporter

RIDE is a collaboration of the Stowe Reporter and the Stowe Trails Partnership.

2018 RIDE

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On our cover: Brooke Kasman of Waterbury wheels through a sunlit forest. Courtesy photo.

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BRIGHT FUTURE FOR STOWE TRAILS

RIDE PERSPECTIVE
EVAN CHISMARK

WHAT IF SOMEONE told you that you could take your passion, whatever it is — pottery, backgammon, Civil War re-enactment — and spend all day, every day, building a community around that passion?

That your job for 40 or 60 or 80 hours a week was to fan those flames, to make it bigger and better, to get more people stoked on the process, and to ensure the long-term health of whatever that thing is.

Sounds rad, no? Well, I can tell you firsthand that it is.

For the past two years, I led the charge at the Stowe Trails Partnership (formerly Stowe Mountain Bike Club) and did all I could to build the mountain bike community and culture in Stowe, while protecting our trails and adding new ones.

I will look back on the past two years as some of the most challenging, rewarding and exhausting years of my life. The running joke in our household is that my time with Stowe Trails Partnership accelerated my already graying hair by a decade.

In what other job are you routinely called to speak before the select



COURTESY PHOTO

Evan Chismark out on the trail.

board, lead eager young shredders on a ride, draft a grant proposal, and cut blowdowns with your chain saw — all in the same day?

I can say with certainty, though, that the collective toil and stress of the past 24 months were not in any way futile: we've added several miles of new trails (with several more on the horizon), participation and membership are up, fundraising is sound, and we weathered the worst natural disaster our trails have ever seen. Even non-mountain bikers are gaining a greater understanding of why trails are of such value to the Stowe community.

The funny thing is, even though all of this happened "on my watch," I had little to do with the growth and success of the past two years. The legion of volunteers behind the scenes who spearhead trail work events, lead group rides, design event posters, manage social media and online content, attend every town meeting there is (and there are many), engage young riders with school-sanctioned mountain bike events, manage Stowe Trails Partnership's books, raise money to build new trails, send thank you notes, design logos, sell T-shirts — this list could go on forever! Point being, I just happened to be the guy whose signature was at the bottom of the newsletters while all of this was happening. All of the credit goes to the amazing people who so selflessly sacrifice their time and energy for the good of the trails.

And if there's a more dedicated, selfless, community-minded group of people out there than the Stowe Trails Partnership board of directors, I'd sure like to meet them. So it was not without great trepidation that I left my post at the Partnership; not only did I love the work, but I love the people I worked with and the friends I made along the way.

See 'Chismark' on Page 4

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CHISMARK

Continued from Page 3

This next phase in my professional life isn't wholly new; it's more of an outgrowth of my time at the Partnership. I believe deeply in the power of community, and through this new venture, I and my business partners are confident we can cultivate a venue by which riders from anywhere and everywhere are able to convene, commune, break bread, raise a glass, and celebrate the universal good will that bikes bring. A trailside hub for bikes, food, culture, art, and all of the wonderful things that make mountain biking so special, all under one roof.

So what's next for Stowe Trails Partnership and Stowe's trails?

After bearing witness to the manner in which this town and the riding community banded together to help repair the trails at Cady Hill, I'm convinced that the sky is the limit. The community is overflowing with people who are willing to sacrifice their Saturday mornings to pick up a tool and build trails. The youth cadre is rife with riders stronger and more skilled than most adults, but who are also highly adept when it comes to advocacy.

Thanks to the relationships we've built, and a lot of unsexy strategic planning, the future looks very bright for Stowe's trails. If that's not

a recipe for success, then I'm not sure what is.

As always, though, we as mountain bikers live and die by the strength of our collective voice (strength in numbers and all that). So if your car is not peppered with STP, WATA and VMBA stickers, shame on you. Kidding! Sometimes participation just means airing up your tires and getting back out there to experience the trails. Sometimes it means repairing a braided trail or doing some other thankless (but still very meaningful) work.

However you choose to participate, I can tell you with the utmost sincerity that your contributions don't go unnoticed and that every bit helps.

So to the riders from the 82 towns, 11 states and two Canadian provinces who entrusted me to spearhead this organization for the past two years, I offer my most sincere thanks. It's been my utmost honor and pleasure to serve this community and I hope I've left it better than I found it.

Happy trails, and I'll see you at Ranch Camp.

Evan Chismark was executive director of Stowe Trails Partnership from January 2016 to May 2018. His new venture, a full-service trailside bike shop with tap room and eatery called Ranch Camp, is at 311 Mountain Road in Stowe.

WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA?

Bikes, Bevs, Beats

The fifth annual B3 festival, sponsored by the Stowe Trails Partnership, is the weekend of June 29-30 and July 1.

It kicks off Friday, June 29, at 4 p.m. with a party on Park Street in Stowe village, with brew and food tastings, kids' activities and a critical mass ride that starts at 6:30. The post-ride party is at Picasso.

Saturday and Sunday will feature lots of group rides for all ability levels, a tricycle race Saturday at 4 at Sushi Yoshi, live music and other activities.

Sunday brings more group rides and a cookout at Trapp Family Lodge. Details: bit.ly/b3feststowe.

Tuesday night group rides

Visiting and don't know the trails? Newbie rider too nervous to go out alone? Your kid rides better than you and you need some more practice?

Stowe Trail Partnership's group rides run every Tuesday through the summer, weather permitting. All levels welcome – seriously!

Hard-core riders can shred ahead and there is always a #lucyapproved newbie group ready to roll – as little climbing as possible and all the sarcasm and cynicism you can handle.

Check stowetrails.org and the Stowe Trails Partnership social media pages for updates on times and locations. After the ride, join the crowd for some grub and brews at a fine local establishment.

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CADY HILL REBOUNDS AFTER HORRIFIC WINDSTORM

By Tommy Gardner

Stowe's Cady Hill Forest is on the mend much faster than really ought to be, because sometimes it takes a while for humans to pick up after Mother Nature.

A freak windstorm the day before Halloween snapped trees within the forest — popularized in recent years as a mountain biking destination — and dropped them like a clumsy giant discarding a handful of uncooked spaghetti noodles.

It was the time between when the last leaves fall from the trees and the first snowflakes arrive — a grayscale portrait with sharp pencil-stroke outlines known in Vermont as stick season.

The pencil strokes in Cady Hill Forest were terrifyingly dramatic.

Now, through toil and organization that surprised even those who toiled and organized, part of the trail network will be partially open to start the summer, even as trail architects work in closed-off areas to rebuild what was destroyed.

"We're a lot further ahead at this time than I ever thought we could be after one winter," Tom Jackman, Stowe's town planner, said in April.

The main parking area for the trail network is a 19-car lot on Mountain Road, but there are other access points, as well — near the town's electrical substation on Cady Hill Road, and from the parking lot shared by iRide bike shop and the Backyard Tavern.

All winter, those entry points were roped off, warning people to stay out for their own protection.

"It was just so dangerous out there right away," Jackman said. "So many widow-makers."

Evan Chismark, the outgoing director of the Stowe Trails Partnership, said winds estimated at 80 to 90 mph roared in from the east, destroying 3 miles of the 10-mile trail network.

"Essentially, every tree was laid flat," Chismark said of the damaged areas.

Jackman said the first order of business was roping off the forest and keeping people out.

The second order was to get a logger in there and clear what the town manager called "stacks of pickup sticks." After all, one man's detritus is another man's treasure, and loggers can fetch good money from the wreckage — pine, spruce, hemlock, birch, or maple, Mother Nature is indiscriminate.

Stowe logger Jed Lipsky all but volunteered to do the work, working with Allan Thompson and Rick Dyer — a "great dynamic duo of foresters," Jackman called them. Jackman said the foresters and loggers dropped whatever they were doing and went to work over the

See 'Cady Hill' on Page 6



COURTESY FILE PHOTO BELOW; GORDON MILLER PHOTO

Above, the wreckage left after an October windstorm decimated 30 percent of the trails through Cady Hill Forest in Stowe. Charlie's trail shown here. Below, bucolic pre-windstorm Bear's trail flow.



COURTESY FILE PHOTO

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CADY HILL

Continued from Page 5

winter. The town government got about \$10,000 from the sale of the timber they harvested.

Crews hope to get at least a couple of contiguous sections of Cady Hill open — probably the popular Snake and Florence, or “Flo,” loops — for summer mountain bike season, and open more as work proceeds.

An all-hands-on-deck trail workday last month helped clear some of the smaller stuff loggers left behind, and gave volunteers a chance to help bring the network back.

“It’s just divide and conquer. We just have to move all that stuff off the trail. There’s so much debris,” Chismark said.

On May 29, the town accepted a bid for about \$48,000 from L&D LLC, a trail-building operation that plans to restore more than 2 miles of trail.

Take a look through any photo collection of 19th- and early 20th-century Stowe, and you’ll see bare hills with stumps and trunks poking up like pins in a cushion. Forests, though, have a tendency to grow back, and not always the same. This brings in opportunities for conser-

vation and recreation.

For trail designers, stumps and logs are potential playthings — ramps, skinny bridges, launch pads. The parts of Cady Hill Forest that need the most work are blank canvases.

Chismark said the windstorm didn’t hurt anybody, and only 3 miles of more than 30 miles maintained by the trails partnership are offline. There are still plenty of places to ride in Stowe.

“We could cry in our beer and say we lost all of our trails in a blink of an eye,” he said. “But once we really got our heads around it, we realized there may be some opportunities.”

The opportunities for wildlife are even more vast, Jackman said.

With a lot of those tall trees downed, the sun gets a chance to shine through the canopy and give a lot of small vegetation a chance to thrive. And with that, you start to see more birds, deer and other animals come to eat.

After the silence in the windstorm’s wake, it wasn’t long before a chorus of chittering started up.

Said Jackman, “It’s like the squirrels sent out a text message that said, ‘Whoa, look! Pine cones on the ground everywhere!’”



PHOTO BY GORDON MILLER

A windstorm last October laid waste to parts of Cady Hill Forest in Stowe. Shown here is Charlie’s trail. The Stowe fire station and public safety building are in the background.

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1. Ride only on open trails

Respect trail and road closures — ask a land manager for clarification if you are uncertain about the status of a trail. Do not trespass on private land. Obtain permits or other authorization as may be required. Be aware that bicycles are not permitted in areas protected as state or federal wilderness.

2. Leave no trace

Be sensitive to the dirt beneath you. Wet and muddy trails are more vulnerable to damage than dry ones. When the trail is soft, consider other riding options. That also means staying on existing trails and not creating new ones. Don’t cut switchbacks. Be sure to pack out at least as much as you pack in.

3. Control your bicycle

Inattention for even a moment could put yourself and others at risk. Obey all bicycle speed regulations and recommendations, and ride within your limits.

4. Yield to others

Do your utmost to let your fellow trail users know you’re coming — a friendly greeting or bell ring are good methods. Try to antici-

pate other trail users as you ride around corners. Bicyclists should yield to all other trail users, unless the trail is clearly signed for bike-only travel. Bicyclists traveling downhill should yield to ones headed uphill, unless the trail is clearly signed for one-way or downhill-only traffic. Strive to make each pass a safe and courteous one.

5. Never scare animals

Animals are easily startled by an unannounced approach, a sudden movement, or a loud noise. Give animals enough room and time to adjust to you. When passing horses, use special care and follow directions from the horseback riders (if you’re uncertain, ask). Running cattle and disturbing wildlife are serious offenses.

6. Plan ahead

Know your equipment, your ability and the area in which you are riding — and prepare accordingly. Strive to be self-sufficient: Keep your equipment in good repair and carry necessary supplies for changes in weather or other conditions. Always wear a helmet and appropriate safety gear.



PHOTO BY MIKE HITELMAN

A wooden track takes riders through a fragile section of the Town Loops trails in Stowe.

About the Stowe Trails Partnership

Our Mission

To partner with the community in building and maintaining a world-class trail network. Mountain biking has always been, and will continue to be, at the core of the Stowe Trails Partnership. Per the terms of the signed agreements we have in place with the Town of Stowe and Stowe Land Trust, our charge is to “develop and maintain multi-use trails suitable for mountain biking.” It’s our hope that the multi-use element of Stowe’s trails encourages participation and ownership from all trail users, not just mountain bikers.

Our Vision

The Stowe Trails Partnership envisions a far-reaching interconnected network of trails that provides diverse recreational opportunities ranging in scope from lunch-hour hot laps with your co-workers to all-day epic journeys. Stowe’s trails are links within the community; they create avenues by which residents and visitors can experience Stowe in an immersive, natural way, and they encourage an active, healthy appreciation for the outdoors among Stowe’s youth. We envision a Stowe connected by trails, with plentiful access and information points and a diverse array of terrain and ability options. Thanks to the forward-thinking hard work of many individuals over the past decade and a half, we’re poised to continue making that vision a reality.

The Board of Directors

Drew Clymer, president; Deb Martin, treasurer; Sue Clifford, Vermont Mountain Bike Association liaison; and Cyril Brunner, Leslie Gauff,

Roger Murphy, Lucy Nersesian, Erik Timmerman, Andrew Volansky and Mike Waldert.

Partnerships

The Stowe Trails Partnership manages three distinct trail pods: Cady Hill Forest, Adams Camp and Sterling Forest (in addition to several connector trails, including Alex’s Trail in Dumont Meadow). Each of these pods is distinct in character, with widely differing trails, views, and terrain. Many of the trails are situated on lands permanently protected under conservation easements held or managed by the Stowe Land Trust, and owned by the Town of Stowe. This unique arrangement means that the lands on which Stowe’s trails are located are protected in perpetuity and, provided we as trail managers uphold our end of the bargain, the trails are as well. Consequently, the Stowe Land Trust is able to focus on land conservation, habitat protection, and increasing recreational opportunities, while we as trail stewards are able to direct our efforts to protecting the trails and ensuring a safe, enjoyable experience for mountain bikers, hikers, runners, dog walkers, Nordic skiers and anyone else who enjoys Stowe’s trails. We rely on the partnerships with the Town of Stowe and Stowe Land Trust for the majority of the trails in the Stowe network. But our partnerships run much deeper: We work with over 60 businesses in Lamoille and Washington counties. These businesses support Stowe Trails because they understand that the trails are more than just a place to ride bikes. They’re a galvanizing force for the community, a place where friendships are

forged, a place where kids can explore, and where we can all escape for a few minutes of tranquility. Without these partners, Stowe’s trails would quite literally not be what they are. So we urge you to support these businesses and organizations that support Stowe Trails Partnership.

History

The Stowe Mountain Bike Club gained 501(c)3 status in 2013, but its true roots date back to sometime around the year 2000. Born of a need for riders to make themselves known to the local landowners, Stowe Mountain Bike Club was a small group of motivated riders who not only gave rise to the network we manage today, but who also wisely had the foresight to organize and establish mountain bikers as a legitimate user group. In 2017, Stowe Mountain Bike Club evolved to the Stowe Trails Partnership as a way to better represent the work being done to protect, manage, maintain and enhance Stowe’s multi-use trail network. The Stowe Mountain Bike Club moniker carried us for over a decade and a half, but as the organization evolved and came to hold a greater voice on both the local and state levels, it became apparent that the term “mountain bike club” undersold our mission as riders and trail stewards. Today’s Stowe Trails Partnership is nearly 1,000 members strong, with over 60 corporate partners, all of whom believe in the transformative power of trails. We hold signed agreements with both the Town of Stowe and the Stowe Land Trust, appointing Stowe Trails Partnership as formal stewards of the mountain bike trails on town land.

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Callagy's Trail honors Stowe woman's memory

By Caleigh Cross

Callagy Fahey Ross would have loved the Sterling Forest mountain bike trail named in her honor, says her father, Bob Ross.

There's a big rock along the trail she would have particularly liked, Bob said — "if you hit it right, it's really fun," he said.

The trail isn't an easy ride — that's part of its authenticity, for those who knew its namesake.

"Callagy was challenging in life," said her mother, Karen Fahey Ross, who's been married to Bob for about 30 years. "In riding this, she's challenging in spirit. I will always have my foot down" while riding the trail.

Callagy died in December 2015 in a snowboarding accident in Jackson Hole, Wyo. She was 23, and had moved to Wyoming a week prior to pursue her passion for snow sports. She was an indomitable athlete, her parents said.

"I don't think she ever used training wheels," Karen said with a tearful chuckle. "She was a force."

Callagy started skiing at 2.

"Certain things she just got," Bob said.

The family took active holidays throughout Callagy's childhood, sharing them with her sister, Sloane, now 23 and a designer in Burlington.

They went to such far-flung locales as Slovenia, Chile and Switzerland, and all over Vermont, Karen said. Callagy wasn't afraid of much, if anything.

At 17, Callagy and 64 others were on a sailing ship 300 miles off the coast of Brazil when a freak storm struck and their ship sank. Callagy



COURTESY PHOTOS

Mountain biking was a family affair for Callagy Fahey Ross, who died in a snowboarding accident in 2015. Callagy, below, is at right in the photo above.

and the others survived, rescued after two nights at sea.

"She was just a super athletic kid," Karen said.

"She just loved being outside," Bob said.

So the idea of dedicating a new trail to Callagy — it's just over a mile, located where the former Billy Goat Trail led into Sterling Forest — seemed natural when Evan Chismark, then executive director of the Stowe Trails Partnership,

approached the Stowe Select Board about it.

The town agreed to give almost \$12,000 to the endeavor, including \$5,400 in revenue from a timber harvest in Sterling Forest, and a team of volunteers and trail builders spent several months constructing a trail that didn't look too manicured and would present a challenge to riders who wanted to get to know Callagy's memory.

The trail was designed and built to

have a "natural flow," which is appropriate for both Sterling Forest, which isn't as accessible as the more beginner-friendly Cady Hill Forest, and for Callagy's nature — she would have wanted something a little off the beaten path, Karen said.

"It was so much manual labor," Karen said.

A group of Callagy's friends from

See 'Callagy' on next page



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COURTESY PHOTO

Callagy Ross loved mountain biking, and frequently took to the trails with her family.

CALLAGY

Continued from Page 8

her time at the University of Vermont came to help. Karen thinks it was therapeutic for them. “They got their fingernails dirty,” she said.

Bob and Karen take the trail often, not always on mountain bikes. Sometimes they hike, or use snowshoes.

Karen has ridden it six or seven times; Bob rides it a little more often.

It brought a smile to Karen’s face when she overheard two men at a Stowe restaurant talking about a ride they’d taken on Callagy’s Trail and “how great it was.”

When Callagy’s parents walk, bike, hike or snowshoe the trail

named for their daughter, they like to maintain a few traditions. Bob, who bakes bread when he’s not at work as an environmental consultant, brings chocolate chip cookies, his daughter’s favorite, and leaves one where her spirit might find it.

Karen likes to bring strings of white, red and orange compostable twine and pass out strands to people she sees walking the trail, tell them about Callagy, and ask them to hang the strands throughout the forest.

“As a parent, your biggest fear is that your child will be forgotten,” Karen said.

She says you have to be looking, but you can see dozens of strands of colorful twine hanging artfully from branches.



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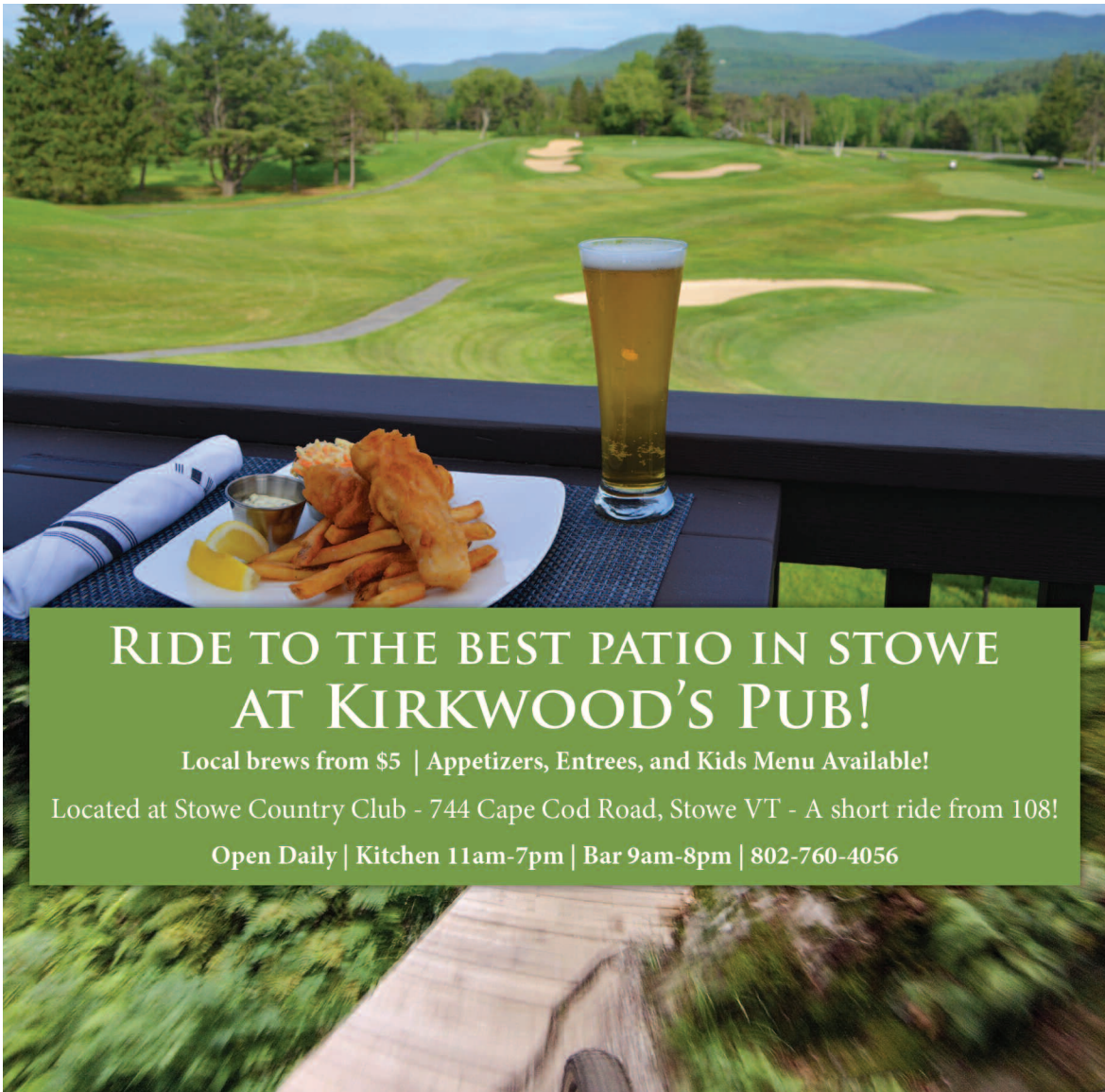
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COURTESY PHOTO

Volunteers – including a group of Callagy's friends from her time at the University of Vermont – helped build a trail that suits Callagy's personality.



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rider profile:
Suzanne McNamara Danzig



COURTESY PHOTO

Suzanne McNamara Danzig

Hometown: Stowe and Allendale, N.J.

Occupation: Gardener.

Age: 65

Weapon of choice (current bike; list any fancy or unfancy upgrades):

My current bike is a Santa Cruz Juliana but I am the lucky winner of the FTW custom bike that was raffled off at the Stowe Trails Partnership bash, so I am looking forward to its completion. Never had a custom-built bike, I have certainly learned a lot about the construction and all the new components that are available for mountain bikes as a result, so this will be a real blast. Can't wait.

Post-ride beverage of choice: How can you live in Stowe and not say a "brew." I have a favorite but not sure it is fair to name it; so many good brews right here.

...

How long have you been a mountain biker?

Almost 20 years.

How did you get into the sport?

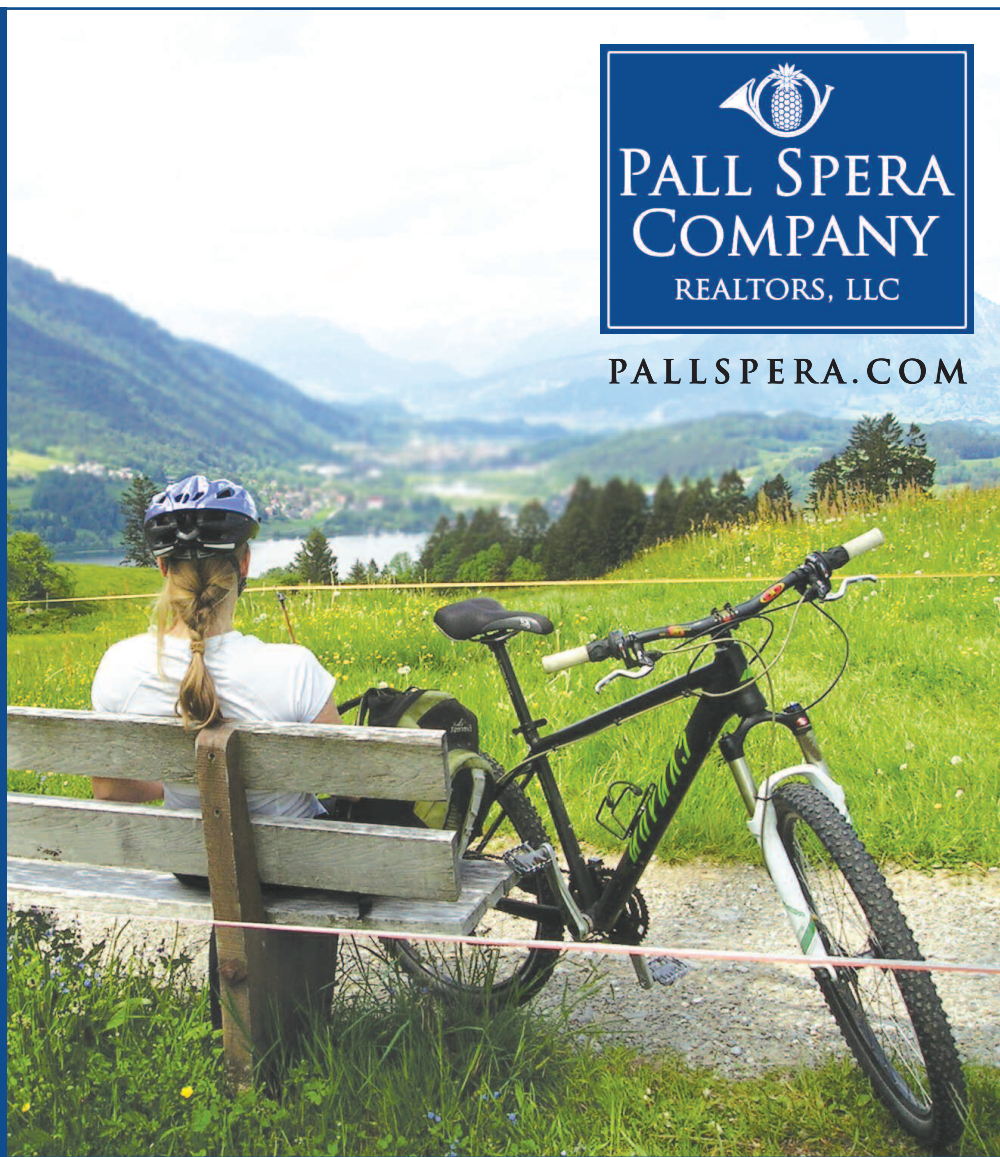
I have been a road rider for a very long time but my love of the woods tugged at me, so I thought combining the two would be a fun skill to learn, and living in Stowe

See 'Danzig' on Page 14

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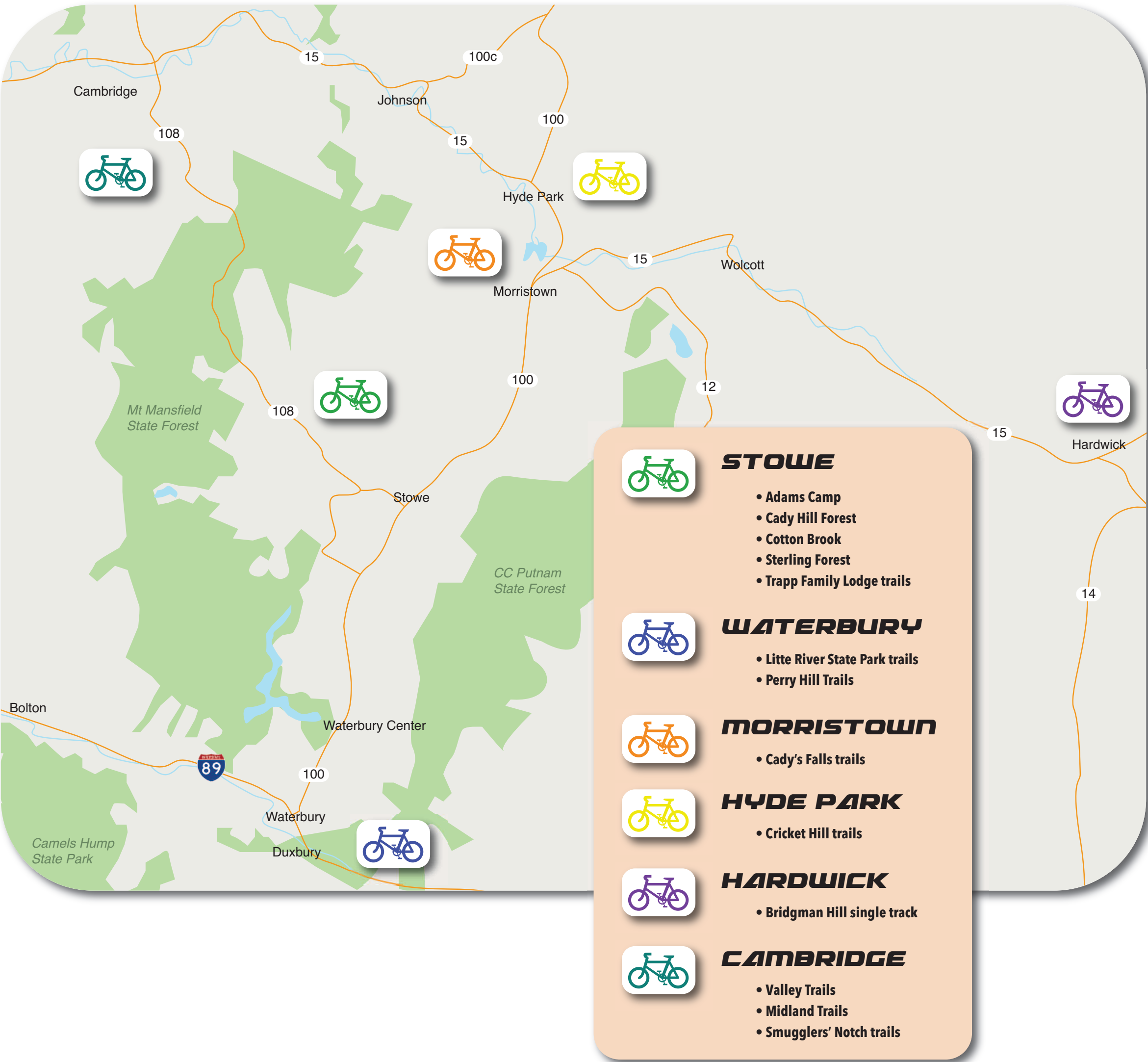
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BIKE NETWORK KEEPS EXPANDING

By Kayla Collier

In the last two decades, mountain biking has exploded across Vermont, and the Stowe-Waterbury-Morrisville area is one of the state's hotspots.

The Vermont Mountain Bike Association is up to 28 chapters now, and its members contributed more than 30,000 hours of time a year to maintain trails and build even more of them, working with public and private landowners.

In this area, more and more riders are throwing a leg over the saddle to take on new trails, and statewide plans are developing to connect trails networks from Killington to Stowe in a project known as Velomont.

"I think it's just a matter of time before mountain biking is to summer as skiing is to winter in Vermont," said Caleb Magoon, a member of the Brewster River Mountain Bike Club and the owner of sporting goods stores in Waterbury and Morrisville.

Velomont is a long-range collaboration among six mountain bike associations, including the Mad River Riders, Waterbury Area Trails Alliance and Stowe Trails Partnership.

The Mad River Riders intend to create a connector trail through the Dowsville Block of Camels Hump State Park to Crossett Hill in Waterbury, providing easy access from there to either the Perry Hill trails network or the Little River State Park trails, where a new 3-mile stretch was added in 2016 and 20 more miles of single-track is in the works.

The added single-track would include a sustainable trail connection to Cotton Brook, where it would link with Stowe trails.

From there, the Stowe Trails Partnership hopes to partner with Trapp Family Lodge to link its trails into that network.

While there are no plans to extend the connectors any farther north into Lamoille County, advanced riders can already make it through to Morrisville and on to Hyde Park.

Magoon knows a group of adventurous guys who have made the trek through Cady Hill and the Town Loops on to Sterling Valley and Mud City Loop, up over Cote Hill to the Cady's Falls trails, with just a few miles of dirt road in between.

Over the years, there has been talk of building a formal path between Stowe and Morrisville, Magoon said.

"It's something I want to get back to and pursue," he said.

For now, because a lot of trails are already available for advanced riders, both on and off the map, the focus is on establishing sustainable, beginner-friendly trails.

One style that's costlier to build, but fun for everyone to ride, is the flow-style trail, Magoon said.

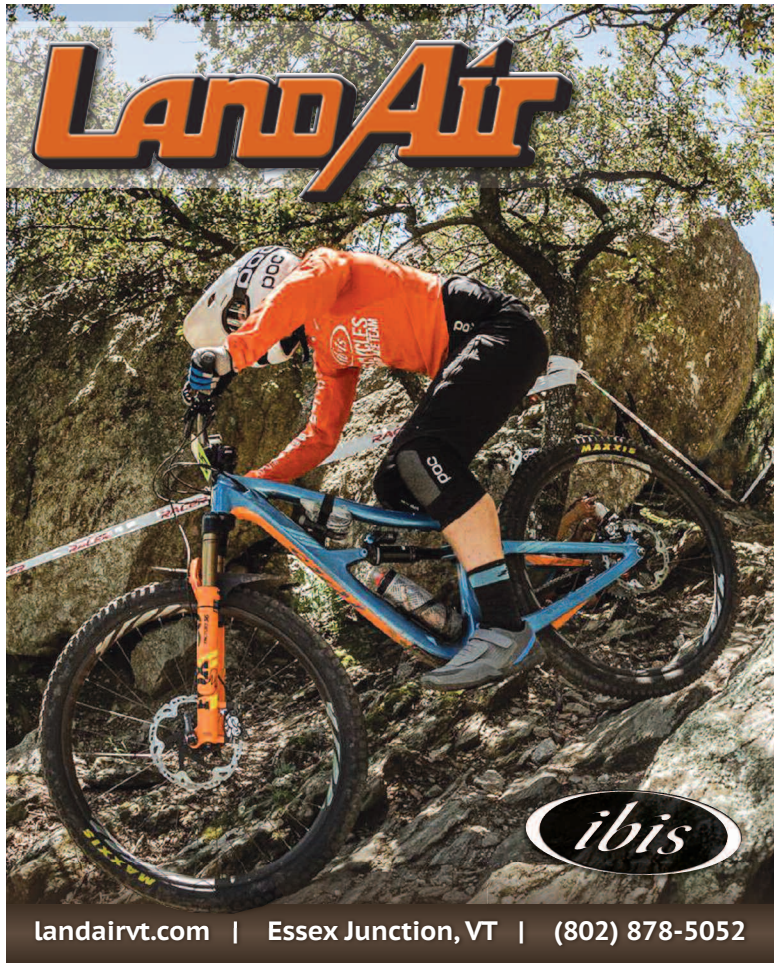
That's what's trending right now, and what was most recently constructed in the Perry Hill and Little River networks on the Waterbury end of the network.

They're smooth, rolling, machine-built tracks with a lot more berms and doubles that can be jumped or rolled over at a relatively slow pace. All the roots and rocks have been removed from these trails.

A few years ago, Magoon and Ryan Thibault of Stowe helped construct a beginner flow-style trail on Cricket Hill in Hyde Park, behind Lamoille Union High School.

The Brewster River Mountain Bike Club just took over

See 'Trails' on Page 20



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DANZIG

Continued from Page 11

back in the 1990s, mountain biking was just taking off.

Why do you love it?

It requires a bit more skill than road riding, or should I say a different set of skills, and again, I am happy when I am in the woods.

Advice for anyone getting into the sport?

If you are over the age of 30 and just getting into it, I recommend taking a lesson or two. Younger than that, your instincts seem to take over and you are all on cruise control, it seems. Nice to have youth on your side.

What's your favorite local ride, and why?

I think Hardy's because I can access it leaving right from home. I could ascend and descend that trail 10 times and never get tired of it. It offers just enough of a challenge switchback uphill and the descent is a blast.

Favorite non-local trail?

Well, I took my daughter down to Pisgah National Forest in Brevard, N.C., for her graduation gift and the trails down there are endless. Beautiful waterfalls and a

forest that changes around every corner.

Smooth and groomed or rough and rooty?

Well, I have to admit I love smooth and groomed. Who doesn't? It is an ego booster. But I always have to challenge myself now and then with the rough and rooty. And with my new, bigger wheels, maybe rough and rooty will be my new favorite.

How does the riding in Stowe compare to other places?

I think our trails are so well maintained compared to other places. And there is always a watering hole nearby.

What time of day do you ride? Why then?

When I can I ride in the morning, my biorhythms (haha) are best then and I think it is less crowded, especially on weekends.

Do you like to ride alone, or with friends or family?

Well, I ride alone a lot — not my preference, however. My favorite is riding with my girls; they are amazing athletes, very patient, and I never feel intimidated when I am riding with them.

rider profile: Mike Thomas



COURTESY PHOTO

Mike Thomas

Hometown: Stowe.

Job: Fun enhancer at Pinnacle Ski & Sports and Ranch Camp

Weapon of choice (current bike; list any fancy or unfancy upgrades):

Evil Following, RS Pike fork, Industry 9 wheels, Schwalbe Muddy Marry/Maxxis Aggressor tires, Sram drivetrain. A short travel 29er with aggressive "all-mountain" geometry. I've never ridden a better "Stowe Bike."

Post-ride beverage of choice: Alchemist Broken Spoke. They really stepped up to support biking in the region, I really want to put my \$\$ behind that. Thank you, Alchemist!

...

How long have you been a mountain biker?

My earliest clear memory is getting a Big Wheel and thinking "I can go anywhere, I'm free!" And that feeling has never left me. I never grew out of riding bikes as a teenager and young adult. I've always ridden bikes.

I grew up in a pretty rural town, so a lot of my early riding was done on forest trails; we just didn't know we were mountain biking. My first "real" mountain bike was purchased in 1992.

How did you get into the sport?

Riding bikes in the woods has

always been something I love doing. Better bikes have made it more fun; better purpose-built trails have made it amazing.

Why do you love it?

It really represents freedom to me. I also just really love moving quietly through the woods with a few friends.

Advice for anyone getting into the sport?

Don't take yourself too seriously, but, like alpine skiing, it's more fun if you develop some skills. Also, buy some good shorts.

What's your favorite local ride, and why?

Mud City. I've invested a lot of sweat equity out there.

Favorite non-local trail?

Neilson Trail, Vallee Bras-du-Nord, Quebec.

Smooth and groomed or rough and rooty?

Rough and rooty with a bit of "flow enhancement" is my favorite style.

How does the riding in Stowe compare to other places?

I love riding in Stowe. I try to ride at least three nights a week here. The diversity is great. We've got some great professionally designed and built flow trail, some easy-ish connector trails and a variety of more natural trails that can be ridden by most people but are hard to ride smooth and quick. I'm not very quick, but I like to feel smooth.

What time of day do you ride? Why then?

After work, because I'm not a morning person. It's also a great way to unwind and clear my head at the end of the day.

See 'Thomas' on next page

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rider profile: Chesley Smith



COURTESY PHOTOS

Chesley Smith

Hometown: Stowe

Age: 16

Occupation: High school student, semi-professional skier.

Weapon of choice (current bike; list any fancy or unfancy upgrades):

Rocky Mountain thunderbolt.

Post-ride beverage of choice:

Root beer.

...

How long have you been a mountain biker?

I have been a mountain biker since sixth grade.

How did you get into the sport?

My dad introduced me to the sport by buying me my first mountain bike for my fifth-grade graduation present. He then proceeded to wake me up very early to ride a lot.

Why do you love it?

I love the challenge and trying to improve on all aspect of riding, be it uphill, downhill, smooth or technical riding.

Advice for anyone getting into the sport?

Talk to people who ride a lot; they will know the best spots to ride. Also don't use your front brake too much.

What's your favorite local ride, and why?

My favorite local ride is Cady Hill because it's got all varieties of riding and it is right within riding distance of my house.

Favorite non-local trail?

My favorite non-local trail is

Craftsbury Outdoor Center.

Smooth and groomed or rough and rooty?

Most the time I like smooth and groomed, but sometimes I like rough and rooty.

How does the riding in Stowe compare to other places?

The riding in Stowe involves a lot of climbing and descending, which I like a lot. Some places are very flat.

What time of day do you ride? Why then?

I ride in the evening after school a lot. Later in the afternoon it is cooler and more enjoyable as well.

Do you like to ride alone, or with friends or family?

I like to ride with my friends, and sometimes with my family.



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GIANT

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THOMAS

Continued from previous page

Do you like to ride alone, or with friends or family?

I like riding with small groups of friends. More than five or six people can get to feel like cat herding. I enjoy riding alone sometimes. I enjoy looking for new trails or new ways of putting routes together by myself — so no one blames me for getting lost.

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COURTESY PHOTO

Brooke Kasman takes the rough and rooty route on a local mountain bike trail.



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rider profile: Brooke Kasman

Hometown: Waterbury

Occupation: Ski lift mechanic

Weapon of choice (current bike; list any fancy or unfancy upgrades):

After wanting a Yeti for about three years now, I finally broke down and just got a SB6!

Post-ride beverage of choice:
Hermit Thrush Green Street IPA.

...

How long have you been a mountain biker?

About 20 years.

How did you get into the sport?

I started mountain biking with my grandparents when I was about 15. They loved riding bikes — road, mountain or recumbent, it didn't matter. They were always on some fun bike trip to Fruita or Moab. When I was in high school, my grandparents took my mom and me on a family vacation to Moab. I think that's where I really fell in love with the sport. Growing up in Colorado, there were plenty of amazing places to ride.

My Grandma used to take me to a place just outside of Buena Vista, Colo., called 4 Mile. She taught me how to ride on the Jeep trails and roads around there. She showed me how to shift through the gears and how to anticipate shifting before going up a big hill. On the downhill, I can specifically remember her yelling at me to get my butt off the seat. Thanks, Grandma!

I acquired my first mountain

bike by sheer luck. Someone abandoned it in a ditch near my stepfather's veterinary clinic. We reported it to the police and after no one claimed it, I got to keep it. I promptly put new lime green tires on the bike so it matched the color of my Volkswagen Rabbit. It had to look good on the bike rack!

When I graduated from high school, I ended up going to college in Grand Junction. I was looking for a club to join and I saw the sign for the Cross Country Club. Of course, I was thinking of cross-country running, which I also did in high school, so it seemed appropriate. When I showed up to the meeting and realized it was a cross-country mountain bike club, I just went with it. The team was loaded with super-fast pro guys and they needed women on the team in order to gain points for NORBA Nationals. Having no idea what I was getting into, I decided to join the team and convinced my roommate to as well. At the time, my "lost-and-found ditch bike" wasn't exactly a race machine. My roommate called it my "death trap." I would ride my death trap during the week and then borrow or rent a bike for every race weekend. Not exactly ideal, but I made it work.

While going to college in Grand Junction, I took a mountain biking class for college credit! That still makes me laugh. I took the class as

See 'Kasman' on Page 17

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COURTESY PHOTO

Brooke Kasman gets some air on a jump in the forest.

KASMAN

Continued from Page 16

part of my “training” for the club I somehow got myself into. The class turned out to be pretty useful. We talked about trail etiquette, yielding to other riders, how to change a flat, how to ride in technical terrain, and we got to ride all the local trails.

Then, after two years of racing on borrowed bikes, almost killing myself learning to ride clipless pedals for the first time during a race at Crested Butte, and using a cross-country bike for both downhill and dual slalom, our team finally made it to NORBA National Championships. That’s when I decided to use the remainder of my student loans to buy my first mountain bike. It was an Orange Chromoly Team Marin. I kept that bike until about four years ago, when I took it to Chuck’s Bikes in Morrisville. I’m sure Hank found a good home for it. I couldn’t bring myself to just throw it out.

Why do you love it?

Mountain biking is a release for me. I’ve probably used it as a coping mechanism more than I should admit. There’s a certain suffer factor I enjoy. Climbing uphill and then being rewarded by the rush of flying downhill as fast as you can. There a sense of accomplishment felt after pushing yourself through a long ride or mastering a new skill.

Like anything in life, most things

worth doing are hard. I enjoy the challenge of learning new things and pushing myself. Sometimes that can be as simple as learning to ride flats after years of being clipped in, concurring a small section of trail for the first time, or learning to jump. I also just love being outside and mountain biking provides a means to explore the outdoors and take in some pretty spectacular scenery. You can cover a lot more ground on a bike than by foot.

Advice for anyone getting into the sport?

Just have fun with it! If you get the chance to take a lesson, it’s probably worth it. Even though I’ve been riding bikes for a long time, I probably didn’t actually learn to ride a bike until about five years ago, when I began to understand the breakdown of the body mechanics. I’m still learning.

What’s your favorite local ride, and why?

I’m not sure why but I’ve always loved riding in Sterling Valley. I guess because it’s raw and old-school. If you start in town and head to the top, you get a good climb, good view, some rocky technical sections in between, and with the addition of Callagy’s, some flow, too.

Favorite non-local trail?

Does British Columbia count? I love that place!

Smooth and groomed or rough and rooty?

Depends on the day but mostly rough and rooty.

How does the riding in Stowe compare to other places?

The trails in Stowe have been built and maintained so well that sometimes I feel we’re a little spoiled. There’s something special about having so many options right out your back door. The riding community here is pretty special. That’s probably why I can’t leave. It’s easy to find people to ride with any day of the week, and if you can’t find anyone, they’re already on the trail.

What time of day do you ride? Why then?

I’ll ride whenever I can. Generally I ride in the afternoon, since that’s when I get off work.

Do you like to ride alone, or with friends or family?

I enjoy both. One of my favorite things to do when I’m riding alone is to just stop on the trail for a few minutes and listen to the leaves blow in the wind and the birds sing in the trees. It’s so peaceful. I also enjoy riding with friends both new and old. Riding with other people pushes me, too, and sometimes that’s crucial.

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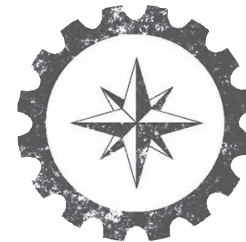
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The Stowe Trails Partnership would like to extend a huge thank you to all of the members and partners that enable this organization to continue building, maintaining and protecting Stowe's ever-expanding trail network.

If you haven't yet had a chance to join or renew for 2018, it's not too late! The season is just getting started and your membership contribution is as meaningful as ever. We're proud to represent Stowe's mountain bike community and look forward to more great things in the years to come. Happy trails!

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Grinder



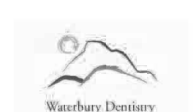
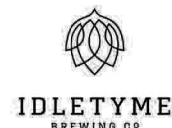
Ripper



Singletrack



Dave Couch



Special thanks to the Stowe Reporter for supporting mountain biking in Stowe
and helping to promote the Stowe Trails Partnership.



TRAILS

Continued from Page 13

maintenance of that small trail and hopes to put up signs, and to develop a few more miles of intermediate and beginner trails on the other side of the road on land owned by the school district.

The other Brewster River trails are in Jeffersonville, Cambridge

To help build a new generation of mountain bikers, the Waterbury Area Trails Alliance has built a kids' track near the Ice Center.

PHOTO BY GORDON MILLER

and Underhill. One system, known as the Valley Trails, isn't mapped and crisscrosses mostly private property in Underhill, where the club must balance between having trails that people ride, but not so many riders that private landowners are disrupted.

The Valley Trails are mainly used by local residents who hear of them through word of mouth.

Volunteering on trail work days is a good way to learn the Valley Trails network, says Brewster River club director Mike Timbers.

"We obviously won't police it, and allow nonmembers to ride those trails, but we have to be careful" how many people are

using the private land, Timbers said.

A new and expanding network between Smugglers Notch and Jeffersonville village, known as the Midland trails, will cover public land conserved by the Vermont Land Trust, and will be mapped and open to the public.

The Midland trails network covers only about 3 miles thus far, but the goal is to expand that network to connect the village with Smuggler's Notch Resort.

Other trails networks in the area include the Hardwick Trails, with access from Hazen Union High School, and the Stowe trails in Adams Camp and Sterling Forest.

DO'S AND DON'TS

Most of these things are obvious — as in r-e-s-p-e-c-t fellow riders, trail users and nature — but just in case...

1. Don't use the trails when they are wet. Walk your bike through wet and muddy areas — not around; that makes the trail wider.
2. Ride with care. Excessive speed, skidding and hard braking cause erosion.
3. Keep single-track single. Vegetation around trails is sensitive and easy to damage or destroy. Avoid widening the trail by taking care when passing others.
4. Taking a break? Move off the trail so others can pass.
5. Share the trails. They're for everyone. When encountering other users, such as hikers, families, dog-walkers, be friendly and courteous.
6. Don't leave a trace. Pack out what you pack in.
7. Riding on private land? Be considerate and quiet to ensure continued access.
8. Ride open trails. Respect trail

closures — and keep an eye out for updates on the Stowe Trails Partnership website. Don't trespass.

9. Control your bicycle. Ride in control and within your limits.

10. Yield appropriately. Let your fellow trail users know you're coming and try to anticipate others as you ride around corners. Riders should yield to other non-riders.

11. Who has the right of way? Riders traveling downhill should yield to ones headed uphill, unless the trail is clearly signed for one-way or downhill-only traffic. You can never go wrong by taking the initiative to yield.

12. Make way for animals. Give them enough room and time to adjust to you.

13. Promote goodwill among all your fellow riders, and have fun!

Sources: Stowe Trails Partnership, Black Hills Mountain Bike Association, International Mountain Bicycling Association.


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PHOTO BY GORDON MILLER

Waterbury Area Trail Alliance volunteers build a fence around a kids' track near the Ice Center. The results of their work can be seen in the photo on Page 20.

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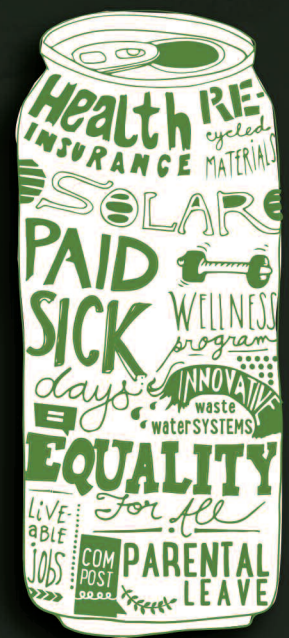
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