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RESPECT THIS GIFT

Riding trails on public or private lands is a gift, not a right. That hiker we just passed? She might own the land we're riding on. With every ride, let's remember to be grateful for the landowners and others who make it possible.

PROTECT NATURE

Enjoy nature, don't ruin it. Keep on the trails. Erosion is our single highest impact when we're out riding. Skidding causes erosion. Cutting corners can cut off access. Riding muddy trails messes it up for everyone. If we see animals, don't bother them, remember them. Pick up trash, pack ti out, carpool here and back.

CARE FOR OTHERS

We share the trails with others, and they have the same rights and responsibilities as each of us. If someone needs help, we help. If someone needs encouragement, we share our enthusiasm. And if it's going to make the situation better, we dismount. Be nice, yield to others, and give a smile.

BE THE EXAMPLE

Being aggressive has no place in mountain biking. We know our limits, and we ride within them. Beyond the ride, let's park where we're supposed to, keep the tunes to a dull roar, and leave the IPAs for après somewhere else. Reckless behavior? A simple, polite call out will do.



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A huge thank you to all
the helping hands...
...that maintain our trails
that connect us all.

Photo By: Darren Benz

We're passionate about our community and the people in it. And like the many trails that are woven through the plush fabric of our landscape connecting outdoor enthusiasts of all backgrounds, ages and ability levels with adventure and nature, we strive to continually find ways to connect people, neighbors and community members with their perfect piece of Vermont. We proudly sponsor Stowe Trails Partnership.



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Welcome from Stowe Trails Partnership: Connect to the dirt

by Rachel Fussell



PHOTO COURTESY OF STOWE TRAILS PARTNERSHIP

Trail organizations such as Stowe Trails Partnership rely on volunteers to keep trails in tip-top condition.

Building on almost two decades of trail management, Stowe Trails Partnership continues to establish its legacy as stewards and advocates for trails in the community. Through these efforts, we aspire to increase access to Stowe's natural beauty and, by extension, the incredible benefits that outdoor recreation and mountain biking provide to residents and visitors.

Our work focuses on enhancing and improving Stowe's multi-use trails for the benefit of our community. In broader terms, we exist to connect our members, neighbors and visitors to local dirt. Connecting to the dirt may seem like an insignificant goal, but studies have shown that being outside and in connection with dirt may make you happier and reduce stress.

Research also points to the stress-relieving properties of spending time in nature by lowering cortisol levels. In most cases, the result of embarking on a bike ride on dirt trails will yield positive health results and happier people.

Today, increased access to dirt and outdoor spaces is more critical than ever, as more people connect



Rachel Fussell

to and seek solace through nature. As we move through 2021, we believe that the lessons learned in 2020 will echo for years to come, including the importance and value of outdoor access for anyone and everyone.

Stowe Trails Partnership is working to break down barriers to entry for new and returning outdoor recreators and improve its mountain biking network so it is accessible to all.

In 2020, close to 3,000 hours of maintenance and work were completed by our trail crew and community volunteers. We spent over \$82,000 on trail enhancements for the benefit of all trail users. We are hosting our first full-time AmeriCorps member to provide in-person outreach and engagement with those who use our trails, and we are working diligently to find a location to build a family-friendly mountain bike skills area, so the next generation will have a place to hone their skills.

As ambassadors and champions of some of Stowe's most valuable natural assets, it is crucial that Stowe Trails Partnership continues to expand the reach of our work in the years to come, especially as we seek to keep pace with the increased and growing demand for our multi-use trails.

We are thrilled to steward the trails that so many new and old faces use to connect with dirt and the natural world, and we invite all riders to join us as a member and supporter in 2021.

By supporting Stowe Trails Partnership, you help ensure that we can maintain and grow our world-class network of trails — a resource that continues to add to the health, vitality and economic vibrancy in our community. Contributions from our community of riders are essential to helping us reach our goal of enhancing and improving our trails for the benefit of all.

With your support, we will continue to steward our trails and will give us the ability to welcome users of all backgrounds to find solace and connection to the dirt.

Rachel Fussell is executive director of Stowe Trails Partnership.



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Let's make sure everyone feels safe, welcome out on the trail

by Leslie Gauff

One thing is for certain, since the outbreak of COVID-19 we've learned that having access to trails is more important than ever. In Vermont, we are so fortunate to have so many accessible trail networks, thanks to the generosity of public and private landowners, and the work of state and local trail organizations.

As with so many areas, trail visits increased here by double digits last year, so we are grateful that we've been able to continue with trail stewardship and development commitments due to the outpouring of generosity from dedicated members, sponsors, access partners and the town of Stowe.

All of this is great news, but does everyone feel they have equal access to our trails? Are there barriers for some who may not feel welcome or safe, which so many of us otherwise take for granted? These are questions that we've become more acutely aware of as a result of a collective societal awakening.

Over the years, the mountain bike community, along with so many others, has had to reckon with its lack of diversity. While mountain biking is still a white-male-dominated sport, the demographic has expanded after conscious efforts have been applied to effect a more inclusive and welcoming environment.

Women and girls, for example, once intimidated to enter this space, are now more confident and are flourishing as a result of successful women's specific program development. Additional inclusivity efforts have been made by the LGBTQ+

community, and adaptive athletes are benefitting from new trail initiatives specifically designed to provide additional opportunities for the physically impaired, one of which is currently underway in

Cady Hill Forest. Efforts for riders who might benefit from pedal assist bikes are now also being made.

These initiatives, thankfully, are taking place in all corners of the state and many places around the country.

There's more work to do though, including focus on people of color and Indigenous peoples, and striving to eliminate conscious and unconscious bias. We need to lean into their stories and grasp an understanding of the barriers they experience, and to help to ensure welcoming, supported and safe spaces.

Stowe Trails Partnership has made a commitment toward these efforts, as many other organizations and companies have, by forming a committee to carry out the work of justice, diversity, equity and inclusion. Among other initiatives, we hosted an interactive workshop last fall, led by Mirna Valerio (aka The Mirnavator), entitled "Equity in the Outdoors," which you can read about at stowe-trails.org/news.

The Vermont Mountain Bike Association and its chapters across the state are doing this work as well, looking to provide equitable opportunities for all. We recognize that we are still in the learning stage, but welcome the greater community to join us along the way.

So, when we hit the trails, let's make sure we are open and inviting, welcoming and promoting equal opportunities, no matter one's skin color, gender, ability or what they look like or who they choose to love. Together we can support and strengthen our relationships with each other, because when we do, we recognize the gift of our shared humanity, and as a result, reach new heights of enjoyment and gratitude.

This is at the core of who we are. Share the trail, and share the joy.

Leslie Gauff is a longtime bike enthusiast and a member of the board of Stowe Trails Partnership.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF STOWE TRAILS PARTNERSHIP

Work crews turn out to help make Cady Hill Forest's Macutchan trail friendlier to adaptive bikes and expand opportunities and accessibility for people of all abilities. Stowe Trails Partnership collaborated with Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports on the project.



Stowe Trails Partnership: Help support our free trail network

by Roger Murphy

The Cady Hill parking lot is full, bike shops are making repairs and selling bikes in record numbers, runners are nursing sore muscles and the town is abuzz with love for the trails.

2021 is shaping up to be a huge year for Stowe Trails Partnership, building on a 30 percent increase in trail usage last year over the year before.

COVID-19 brought people out to our trails in record numbers, walking, biking, skiing and snowshoeing. Locals and visitors alike took to the network looking for solitude, exercise, camaraderie and, perhaps, even a little “forest bathing.” (Look it up, the Japanese know what’s up!)

So if you haven’t been out yet this year, dust off that old bike or snug up your shoelaces, and hit the trails.

Stowe Trails Partnership maintains over 35 miles of multi-purpose trails, working with such forward-thinking partners as the town of Stowe, Stowe Land Trust, Trapp Family Lodge, Strawberry Hill Farm and Percy Farm. Remarkably, none of our trails is owned by Stowe Trails Partnership. Every single inch exists through the generosity of public and private landowners. What is perhaps even more extraordinary is that none of these landowners expects a dime in return for allowing us to build and maintain trails on their land.

Some of them even donate to maintain those very same trails. Since the beginning, our landowning partners have realized the value of a public and accessible trail network to the vitality of the town and the health of both the individuals who live here and those who choose to come here to recreate and get a taste of what locals enjoy every day.

Of course, while users are not charged a fee to use the trails, we rely on an extended network of individuals and businesses to support our efforts, as well as the generosity of Stowe taxpayers through an annual trail maintenance grant from the town.



Roger Murphy

With more than 1,200 members, 59 community sponsors that donate above the membership cost, and 71 business supporters, I can attest that after almost eight

years of monthly board meetings, every single dollar that comes to Stowe Trails Partnership is wisely spent.

These trail donations go into new bridges, reshaping trails for adaptive bikes, new signage and our trail crew keeping things buff (where appropriate) or using a more sustainable approach on the “old school” trails. And, of course, we have the best executive director on two wheels, Rachel Fussell.

From its inception, we have held firmly to the belief that the trails should be free, and we promise to continue putting your donations and membership dollars to good use.

The trails are yours and they are here through the generosity of so many people. Use them, love them and if you’ve got the ability, join us as a member to ensure that they will be around for generations to come.

Roger Murphy is rider and board president of Stowe Trails Partnership.

POWER UP YOUR RIDE



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAMOILLE VALLEY BIKE TOURS

Looking to cut your carbon footprint? Borrow – or buy – an e-bike. The Stowe Energy Committee offers two e-bikes for loan this summer through Local Motion’s E-Bike Lending Library. The lending library will be in Stowe through July 30. To reserve, go to localmotion.org/travelingebikes. Questions? Contact Stowe Energy Committee at energycommittee@stowevt.gov.

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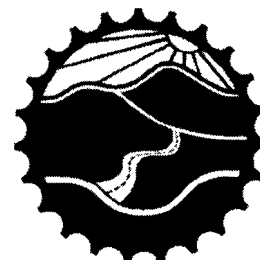
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Hucksters and shredders scale the trails

Stowe Mountain Bike Academy inspires next gen

by Avalon Styles-Ashley

Teodor Gudas was 7 years old when he first hopped on a mountain bike. Now 9 — and a half — and a regular trail shredder, Gudas owes most of his knowledge to the Stowe Mountain Bike Academy.

“I’ve always dreamed of being airborne for a few seconds at least and mountain biking gives me that feeling of flight when I am in the air jumping,” Gudas said. He loves the academy coaches, the new friends he’s made, and the rush of accomplishment he feels when landing a jump.

Founded in 2018, the Stowe Mountain Bike Academy started out small with a dozen or so bikers and a couple coaches riding trails in the greater Stowe area. As of this spring, the crew has grown to 175 riders, according to Ross Scatchard, director of program development and head coach.

He described the Vermont mountain biking scene as “extensive and inclusive for everyone,” which complements the academy’s wide range of programming for adults and youth of various skill levels. They offer private or small group instruction, guided rides, summer camps and day trips for youth 6-18, a youth progression program for kiddos just learning to ride, and various racing programs.

Many wide, smooth flow trails around Stowe offer a comforting first step for a newbie. “It definitely makes the feeling of going up for a mountain bike ride more accessible to new and younger riders,” said Scatchard.

But more advanced trails, ripe

with roots and boulders, are also plentiful for experienced riders seeking a little more of an adrenaline rush.

“Between Morrisville, Stowe and Waterbury there’s days-worth of riding. It never really gets old,” Scatchard said. That does not even take into account riding ops in Chittenden, Franklin and Washington counties, or the Northeast Kingdom.

Also in the academy is Maddy Doirin, 14, who first learned how to mountain bike with her dad. The most challenging part of mountain biking, she said, is digging deep and pushing “even when you feel like you’re already given everything.”

She loves racing, especially on such a positive, supportive team. Later this summer she’ll travel with the academy racing team to Thunder Mountain Bike Park to compete at an Eastern States Cup race.

“The coaches give me a ton of confidence and I can carry this on to other things I do outside of biking,” Doirin said.

The academy’s 10 coaches hail from a variety of backgrounds, from professional racers to outdoor educators, primarily from around New England. While riders can join a variety of programs and camps, Scatchard said the academy’s core mission is “teaching mountain bike progression safely and positively.”

When all of that practice all comes together, Scatchard feels the most enjoyment as a coach.

“Seeing a rider that’s been practicing a skill have that ‘aha’ moment and apply the coaching and teaching to do their riding on the trail, it’s like unlocking a total new world of fun,” he said.

“THE COACHES GIVE ME A TON OF CONFIDENCE
AND I CAN CARRY THIS ON TO OTHER THINGS
I DO OUTSIDE OF BIKING.”

— Maddy Doirin






PHOTOS BY JACOB SHAPIRO

Kids – and adults – learn to mountain bike in a safe and positive progression, the core mission of the Stowe Mountain Bike Academy.



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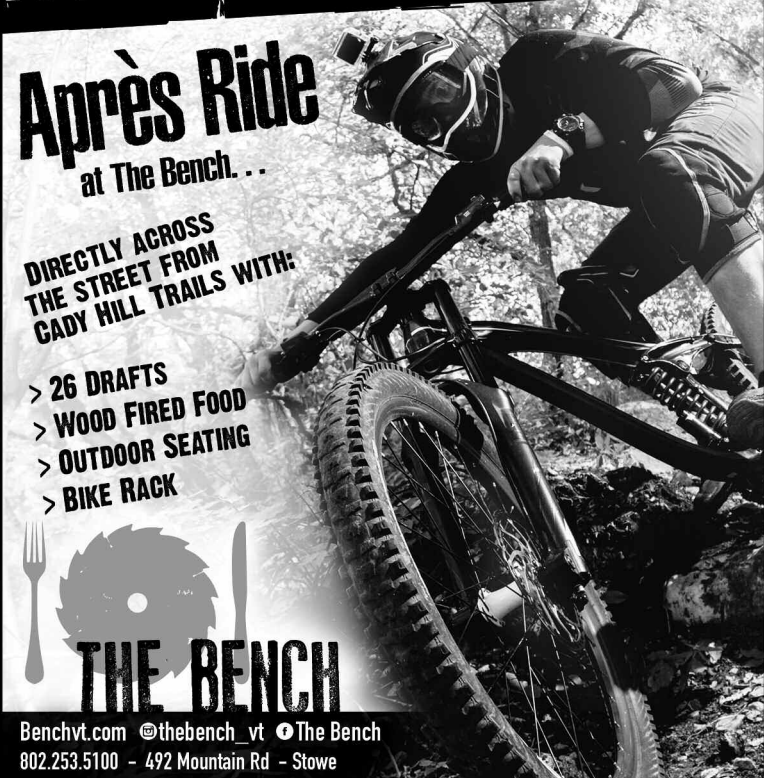
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Get networked

From Adams Camp to the Kingdom, there's no shortage of trail to ride

by Scooter MacMillan

If you're going mountain biking in Vermont, break out the hyperbole. It's going to take a thesaurus full of superlatives to describe the experience — as in the raddest, baddest, craziest, gnarliest and just plan best experience on two wheels.

Some trails require riders with a very particular set of skills, so if you're new or newer to the sport, it's a good idea to start by doing some research, asking around — locals and bike shops are great resources — and picking a trail or area suited to your abilities. Most trail networks offer trails with variety of skill levels.

The great thing about mountain biking is that besides the biking, you'll encounter spectacular vistas, rambling mountain streams, moss-strewn erratics, lovely mixed hardwood and softwood forests, swimming holes, and abundant wildlife.

"Happy trails to you / Until we meet again / Happy trails to you / Keep mountain biking until then ..."

PERRY HILL

Location: Waterbury

Getting there: River Road. A short distance to the trailhead from the parking area.

Miles of tracks: 10 miles of intermediate to advanced, sometimes strenuous mountain biking trails. 15 trails, 781 feet of vertical

Maintained by: Waterbury Area Trails Alliance

Known for: S'Mores, a "masterfully crafted flow trail." Rats Man, WATA's longest trail.

Description: Dramatic downhills and arduous uphill. Some say these technical singletrack downhills are the best in Vermont. A smorgasbord of options from rock challenges to masterfully crafted flow to rewarding climbs ... even family friendly.

ADAMS CAMP

Location: Stowe

Getting there: Just past the Matterhorn on Stowe's Mountain Road, up Ranch Brook Road. Other access from Stowe High School and Brook Road.

Miles of tracks: 5

Singletrack or doubletrack: Eclectic mix of doubletrack, technical singletrack and flow.

Maintained by: Stowe Trails Partnership

Shared use: Hiking, trail running, snowshoeing, Nordic

Description: A 513-acre conserved property with seven MTB trails. The property sits next to the Ranch Valley, a historic winter recreation area. It provides access to private trails owned by Trapp Family Lodge that require a pass to ride.

CADY HILL FOREST

Location: Stowe

Getting there: On Mountain Road across from the Town and Country Resort, ¾ of mile from Route 100 in the center of Stowe. A second access through Cady Hill Road substation.

Miles of tracks: 11 miles

Maintained by: Stowe Trails Partnership

Shared use: Hiking, trail running

Description: 23 trails on 320 acres whose diverse terrain, great views,



PHOTOS BY CHUCK WASKUCH

Hardy Avery at Adams Camp in Stowe for a Stowe Magazine photo shoot nearly a decade ago.

easy access from the town and Stowe Rec Path, caters to just about any skill level, and has made it the flagship trail network of the Stowe Trails Partnership and one of the most ridden trail networks in the Northeast.

STERLING FOREST

Location: Stowe

Getting there: End of Sterling Valley Road.

Miles of tracks: 9 miles with 14 trails

Maintained by: Stowe Trails Partnership, others

Shared use: Hiking, trail running, snowshoeing, Nordic, backcountry, horse, snowmobiling

Description: Sterling trails are part of a giant swath of protected land — 1,530 acres — used by a variety of different outdoor enthusiasts. Unique among Stowe's trail networks due to its remote location and backcountry feel. The trails are challenging, and the setting offers a sense of isolation that can be hard to find these days.

LITTLE RIVER, COTTONBROOK

Location: Stowe

Getting there: Off Nebraska Valley Road

Trails: 4

Total vertical: 2,235 feet

Shared use: Dog walkers, hiking, trail run-

ning, horses, snowmobiles, snowshoe, backcountry and Nordic ski

Known for: Post bike swims, fatbike friendly

Description: "From the challenge of the grueling 9-mile Cotton Brook Road climb to farmhouses and orchards and a gentle afternoon stroll to Waterbury reservoir, this place has it all." Connects to Little River State Park.

CADYS FALLS

Location: Morristown

Getting there: Duhamel Road, park on left just before the nursery.

Miles of tracks: 29

Primary trail type: All-mountain, downhill

Shared use: Hiking, trail running, horses

Description: Network entrance is on the right at the top of the road past the nursery. A downhill course, trails all end by dumping riders out on The Way Out. Some riders say trails aren't well marked, but it's hard to get lost. There's always The Way Out.

MOBBS FARM

Location: Jericho

Getting there: Off Browns Trace Road.

Miles of tracks: 49 trails, total of about 10 miles

Maintained by: Fellowship of the Wheel, Town of Jericho

Shared use: Hiking, trail running, horse, snowshoeing, Nordic, hunting.

Description: Some nice natural, mostly rake and ride trails. Offers a good variety of riding. Includes a number of rock ledges. Americana is characterized by "steep ascents and descents, technical single track." Lots of different users here.

Apres bike: Secret swimming holes!

HINESBURG TOWN FOREST

Location: Hinesburg

Getting there: Three access points:

Economou Road, Hayden Hill Road East, and Hayden Hill Road West.

Miles of tracks: 18 miles and 17 trails

Maintained by: Fellowship of the Wheel

Shared use: Hiking, snowshoeing, hunting,

with occasional permitted use of ATVs and horses on the town-maintained Eagle Trail.

Description: 850-acre historic town forest. See old rock walls, foundations, wells, apple trees and other signs of a bygone era. Trails are primarily "old-school rake-and-ride," and can be quite challenging. Limited options for beginner and intermediate riders. Set in the middle of three contiguous networks, the Hinesburg Town Forest is an

excellent jumping off point for some of the longest, most challenging rides in Vermont. “Head up and over to the incredible Carse Hills trails to the south or climb up to the Butternut Cabin at Sleepy Hollow to the north,” say the Fellowship of the Wheel folks.

CARSE HILLS

Location: Hinesburg

Getting there: Access from Lincoln Hill Road, Big Hollow Road and Hollow Road.

Miles of tracks: 10 miles

Highlights: Henry’s Highlands, Preacher, Crucible, Pinner and Voodoo Child

Maintained by: Fellowship of the Wheel

Shared use: Hikers and trail runners.

Description: Some say Carse Hills offers some of the best singletrack in Vermont on land nestled between Lincoln Hill and Hollow Road. It features big climbs, large old growth trees, meadows with spectacular views, and a classic ridgeline. A real gem for advanced riders. Nice combo of technical and flowy. Advanced trails incorporate freeride options such as rock faces, jumps and wooden features.

HOWE BLOCK – CAMEL’S HUMP STATE FOREST

Location: Waitsfield

Getting there: Tucker Hill Road or American Flatbread parking lot

Miles of tracks: 13 miles with 14 trails

Maintained by: Mad River Riders

Shared use: Hiking, e-biking, trail running, horse, snowshoeing, backcountry, Nordic

Description: Intermediate to expert with a combination of old-school rooty, rocky trails to more flowy, machine-made intermediate trails. Fun and popular. Lots and lots of climbing means lots of fun on the way down.

KINGDOM TRAILS

Location: East Burke

Miles of tracks: 98 miles, 188 trails

Highest trailhead: 1,728 feet

Maintained by: Kingdom Trail Association

Shared use: Hiking, trail running, snowshoe

Description: Mostly singletrack, but some double and dirt too. 75 percent of the trails is intermediate to black diamond. Trails for all ages and abilities, from technical single track to excavated flow trails, skills parks, pump tracks and mellow double track. The interconnected network allows riders to go from one end to the other with the village of East Burke at the heart.

New this year: Another Round gives riders the option to ride a special pocket of trails in multiple directions. “Twisty, with an old school feel, riders with a keen eye may catch a glimpse of the Burklyn Mansion and Inn at Mountain View Farm. Two short bridges built with milled hemlock timbers pulled from the forest bring the trail some cool character.” Oh, and Lawson’s Finest Kingdom Trails IPA supports the Kingdom Trails Association.

Sources: stowetrails.org, trailforks.com, fotwheel.org, vmba.org, madriverriders.org and kingdomtrails.org.



On trail in Stowe What's New?

Serenity & Adrenaline

Stowe Trails Partnership has started construction on a new trail, Serenity & Adrenaline, Stowe's first fully sanctioned and mapped double-black trail.

It provides a new trail for advanced riders and those looking to bump up their skills. Serenity & Adrenaline will be located in the Adams Camp trail network and is made possible through partner and landowner, Trapp Family Lodge.

Adaptive Loop in Cady Hill Forest

In partnership with Vermont Adaptive, Stowe Trails Partnership is refurbishing a 7.2-mile loop in Cady Hill for adaptive mountain bikers and users. The adaptive loop will be open to the public by July 2021.

TUCX's Trail

TUCX's, otherwise known as Ted's Unicorn Express, connects the Luce Hill Trail on Trapp Family Lodge property to the Adams Camp trail network via single-track and keeps users off the doubletrack Haul Road.

TUCX's officially opened in May, and public access is possible through the generosity of a private landowner.

New challenge features

Across the Stowe trail network, dedicated volunteers have added new optional challenge features for advanced riders or those looking for more progression. These features include a unique log ride on Charlie's Trail, a new skinny option on Pipeline, and other advanced features along some of our most iconic trails.

Stowe MTB skills area

After many years of searching, Stowe Trails Partnership is excited to have found a location for a mountain bike skills area in Stowe. The group is currently working with the landowners to complete this project's design and planning phase, but the group hopes to share more information as soon as it is available.

Cady Hill Forest weekly trail sits

Are you looking for a specific trail or route? Have questions about how to support the trails? Want to know more about trail etiquette guidelines?

Each week stewardship coordinator Alex Reiber is at the Cady Hill Forest parking area to guide trail users and answer questions.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STOWE TRAILS PARTNERSHIP

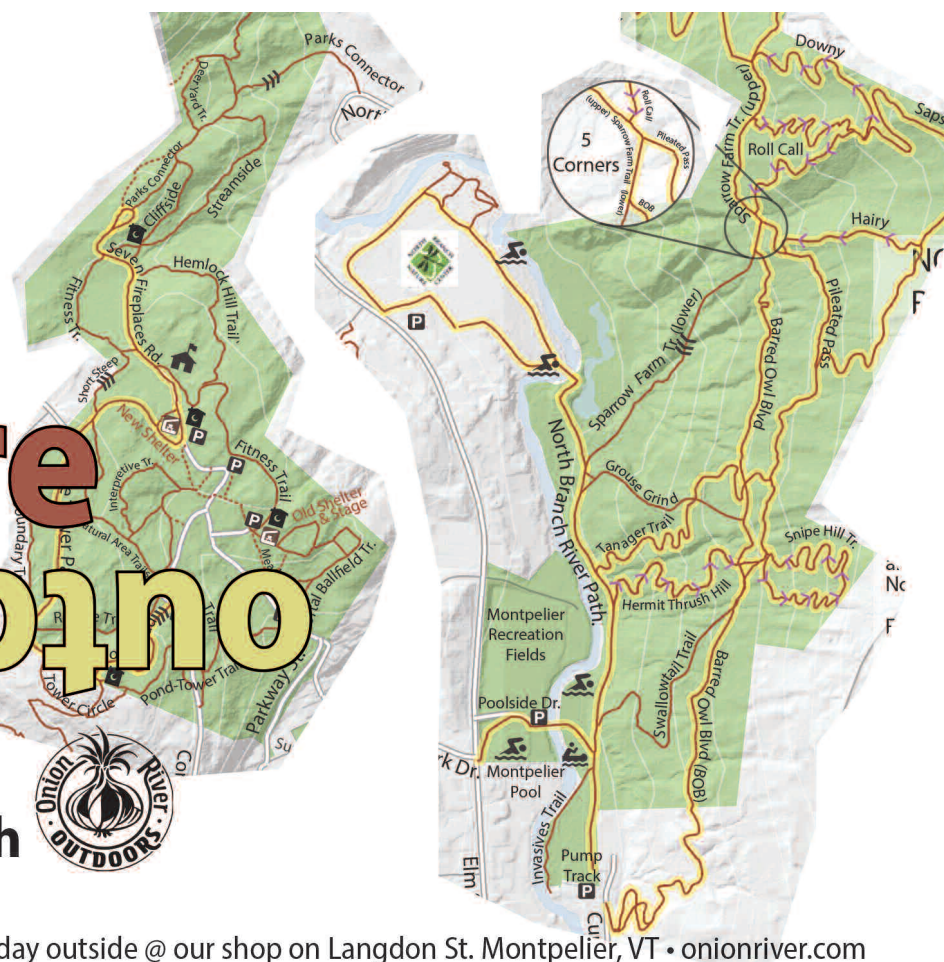
Volunteers building the new expert trail in Adams Camp: The Serenity & Adrenaline project.

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RIDE

Stowe bike group, Ten Bends Beer partnership supports trail network

In alliance with the Stowe Trails Partnership, Ten Bends Beer is producing Trailgazer, a new IPA that's a distant cousin of the brewery's popular Skygazer Session and Rotary Chaos IPAs.

Trailgazer is a light, crushable — like your favorite trail — and fruit-forward IPA designed with outdoor enthusiasts in mind, specifically Vermont's avid mountain biking community.

With an alcohol by volume on the lower end at 5.5 percent, Trailgazer might just be your new perfect post-ride celebration.

"Will Ewald, our distribution

partner with Vermont Beer Shepherd, brought us this idea and asked if we wanted to connect with Stowe Trails Partnership and make it a reality," said Jason Powell, co-owner of Ten Bends Beer. "We were immediately excited because our entire staff regularly enjoys the Stowe trail system, so this was a great way for us to give back while creating a beer that we believe will become a favorite among Vermont's outdoor enthusiasts."

Ten Bends is donating one dollar from every Trailgazer four-pack sold in Vermont directly to the Stowe Trails Partnership.



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According to Rachel Fussell, executive director of Stowe Trails Partnership, donations will go directly toward maintaining trails.

“We are thrilled to be working with Ten Bends Beer to support our trails. Having a distinguished craft brewery like Ten Bends Beer, which brews its beer right down the road and is rooted in Vermont, is a perfect partnership,” she said.





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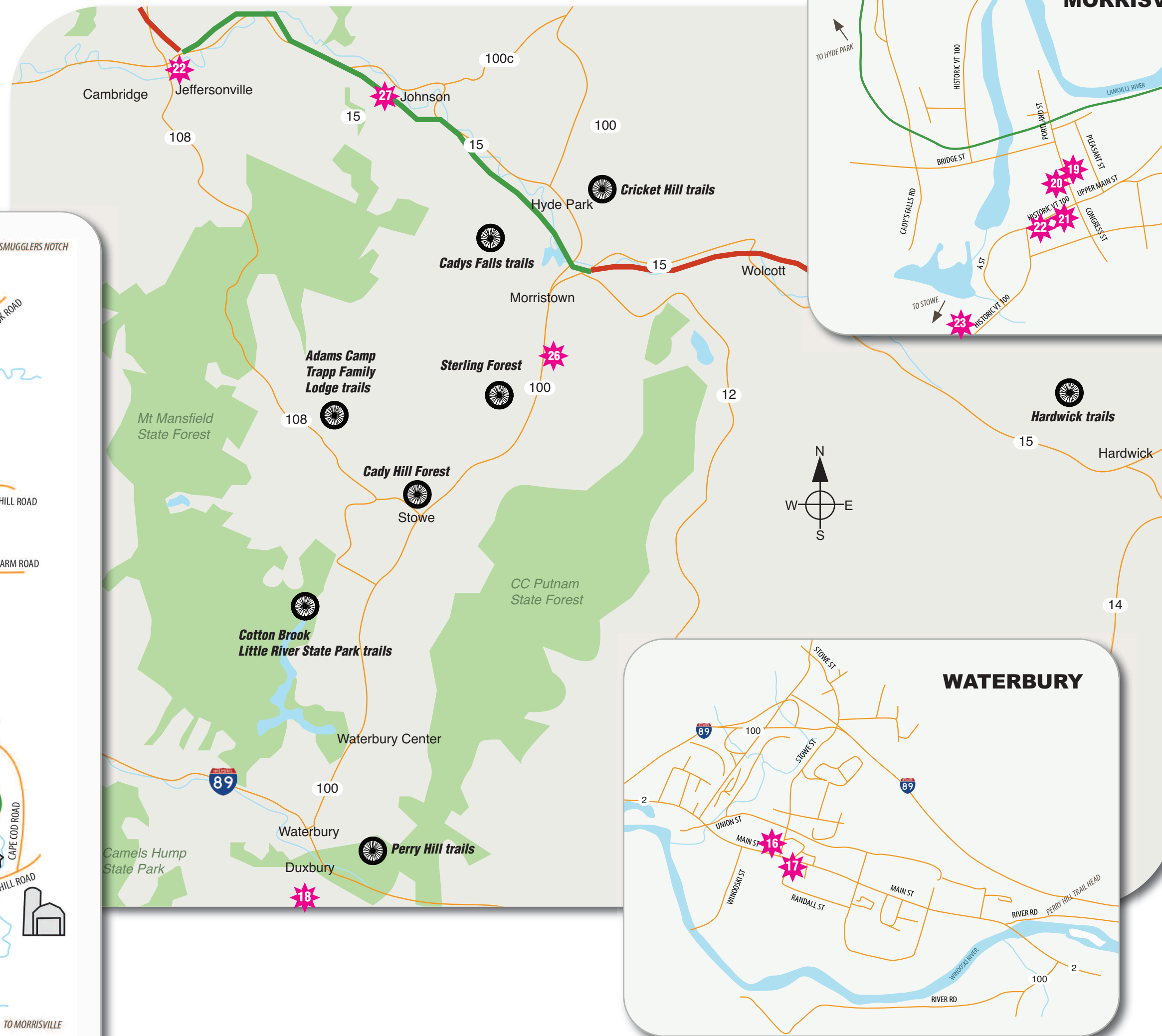
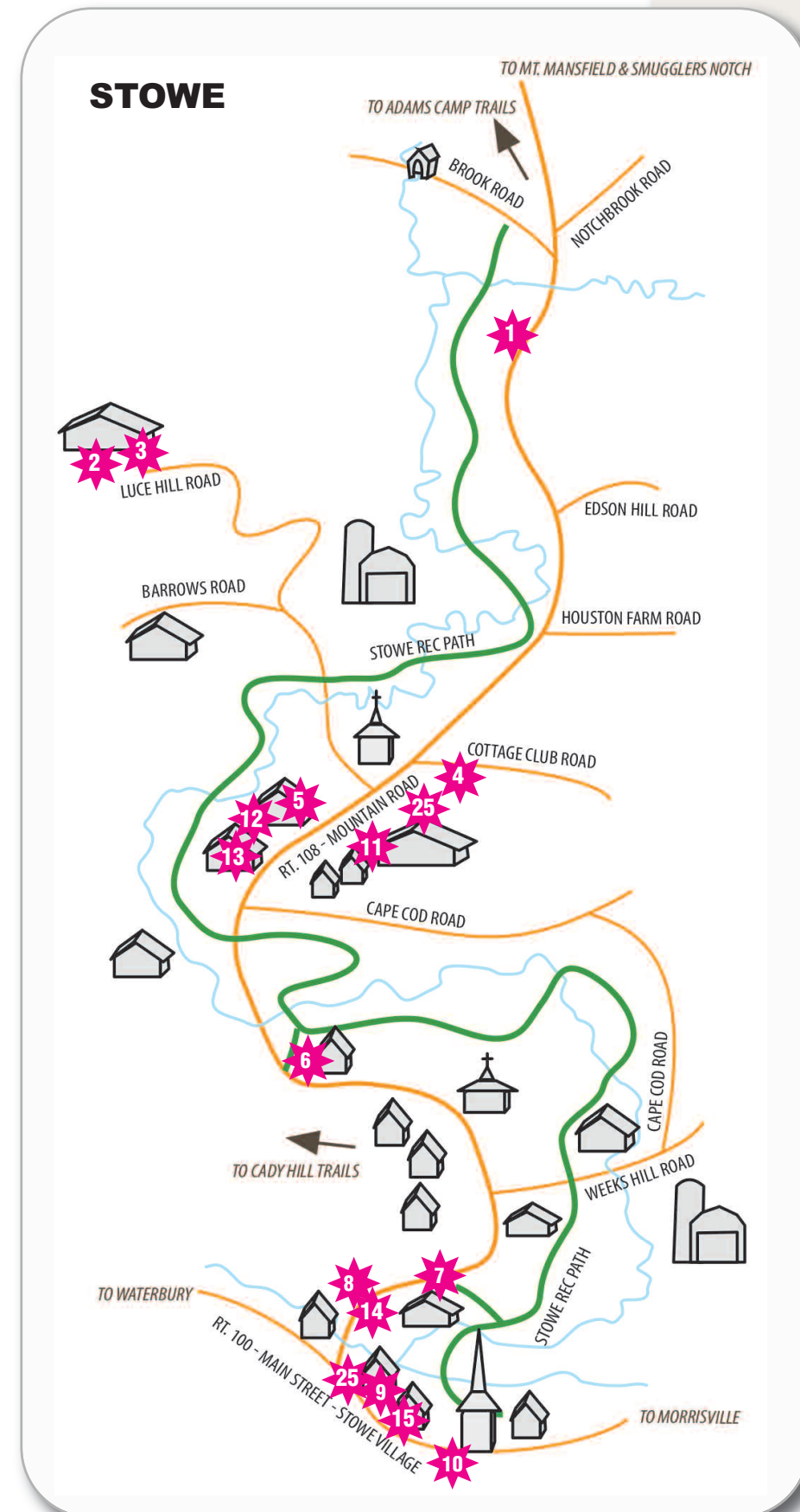


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Cotton Brook/Little River
 Park at the gate on Cotton Brook Road
Sterling Forest
 Take Sterling Valley Road to Sterling Gorge Road.
Trapp Family Lodge trails
 Located at Trapp Family Lodge

WATERBURY
Little River State Park trails
 Take Little River Road, just west of Waterbury village
Perry Hill trails - WATA
 Park at the lot on River Road, off S. Main Street

MORRISTOWN
Cadys Falls trails
Parking area at the end of Duhamel Road

HYDE PARK
Cricket Hill trails
Park at the lot on Cricket Hill or Lamoille Union High School, Route 15

HARDWICK
Hardwick trails
Park at Hazen Union High School or Green Mountain Tech Center

CAMBRIDGE
Valley trails
 Park at Valley Dream Farm, Pleasant Valley Road

Midland trails
 Park at Brewster River Park, Canyon Road; or near the intersection of Clif Reynolds and Edwards roads

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

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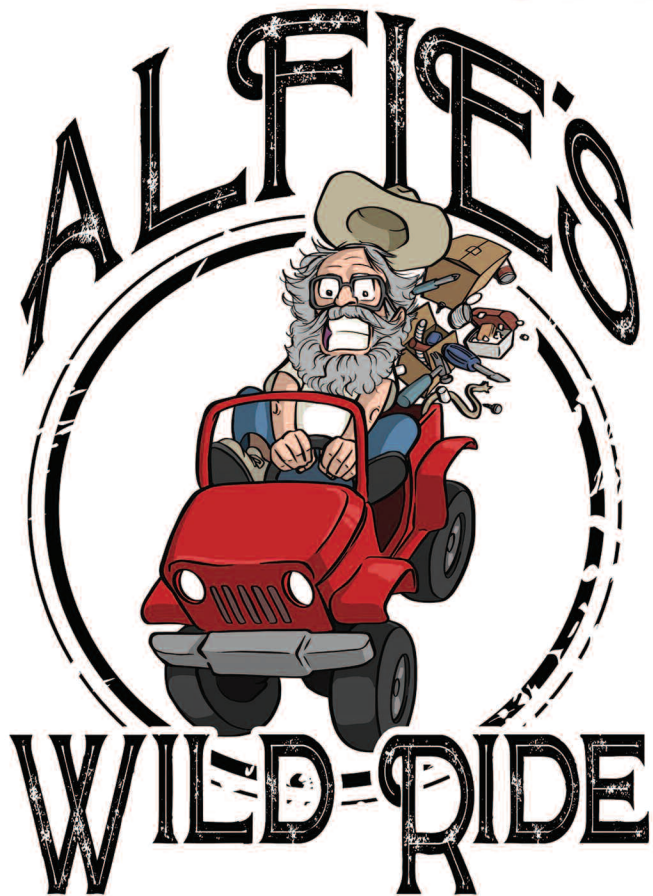
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CALENDAR

July 17 — Raid Lamoille, Craftsbury / grvl.net

Traverse some of the most sublime gravel in the Northeast, followed by a not-to-be-missed after party. 55- and 25-mile routes.

July 30 - Aug. 1 — Flow State: Vermont Mountain Bike Festival, Ascutney Trails / nemba.org

Three-day celebration of all things mountain biking on Ascutney's 35-mile network of singletrack, plus 20 more on private property. Product demos, guided rides, clinics, food trucks and beer, live music, more.

Aug. 1 — Rooted Vermont, Richmond / rootedvermont.com

Two course lengths — 45 or 85 miles — mostly on dirt and 3,500 or 8,000 feet of climbing. Some of the gravel will be silky, some more rugged.

Aug. 7 — Vermont Gran Fondo, Bristol / vermontgranfondo.com

A single ride. Over 10,000 feet of climbing. Four gaps — Lincoln Gap, App Gap, Middlebury Gap, and Brandon Gap. PS: Gran fondo is Italian for "big ride."

Aug. 14 — Irreverent Road Ride 10.0, Goshen, bikereg.com

Still irreverent, still not for everyone, still, as organizers say, "the single most challenging dirt road ride ever offered for mass consumption."



WATA Gravel Grinder

FILE PHOTO

Aug. 29 — Race to the Top of Vermont, Stowe / rtttovt.com

Hikers, bikers and runners climb Mt. Mansfield on the historic 4.3-mile Toll Road — 2,564 feet of up. For some it's about being the fastest.

For others, it's a test of their mettle.

Sept. 3-6 — Green Mountain Stage Race, various locations / gmsr.info
Four challenging days of racing in the heart of the Green Mountains.

Sept. 11 — Kelly Brush Ride, Middlebury / kellybrushfoundation.org
Roll through any of the Kelly Brush Ride routes — 10, 20, 50, or 100 miles — with Green Mountain and Adirondack views at nearly every

turn. Best of all, raise money for the Kelly Brush Foundation.

Sept. 12 — Cabot Ride the Ridges, Cabot & Peacham / bikereg.com

Two classic gravel-grinders — 100k (7,500 feet of elevation gain) and 60k routes (3,500 feet) — as well as a challenging 30k and a family-friendly 10k.

Sept. 25 — Peacham Fall Fondo 2021, Peacham / peachamfallfondo.com
50-mile community ride on Northeast Kingdom's best gravel.

Oct. 2 — Vermont Rare, Peru / vermontrare.org
40.6 miles. 4,000 feet of climbing. Holt Mountain Road. 88 percent gravel.

Oct. 10 — SoVermont Gravel Grinder, Dorset / bikereg.com
75 miles.

Oct. 16 — The Hibernator, West Burke / bikereg.com

Up and down and up and down on scenic dirt roads, class IV, trails, grassy farm fields and singletrack. 50k and 100k+ options. Gravel/cross rigs or a hard-tail mountain bikes. Blowdowns, cobbles, trenches and dismounts are not out of the question. "Undoubtedly one of the hardest events in Vermont," say the Hibernator folks.

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This used to be my ski town ...

Mountain bikers turn Vermont winter communities into all-year destinations

by Tommy Gardner

Thirty years ago, when one talked about outdoor recreation in ski resort towns, the talk was all about the winter and skiers grumbled about the relatively-new subset of knuckle-dragging snowboarders.

Thirty years ago, mountain biking was seen by many as a scourge, with hooligans on hardtails cutting trails through the woods, usually without permission.

What a difference three decades makes.

Stowe is still very much a ski town in the winter, but it's also become in recent years a destination for mountain bikers, as marquee trail networks like Cady Hill Forest, Ranch Camp and Sterling Valley pop up in the same kinds of travel magazines, social media feeds and travel marketing strategies that projected snowfall totals do in the winter.

"And it's trending more that way with climate change," Rachel Fussell, executive director of Stowe Trails Partnership, said recently.

"With Stowe, it's such a unique and interesting thing, how it used to lean so heavily on the winter, and now we don't even really have shoulder seasons."

Fussell was referring to the uniquely Vermont fifth and six seasons — mud in mid-spring and stick in mid-autumn — that historically turned ski resort communities into ghost towns. While towns like Stowe do still experience a dip in tourism during those times, the cycling scene keeps them coming.

That was especially true this past year, as record numbers of people purchased bikes to get some fresh air when inside air was downright frightening, and as a heatwave in April baked the mud out of many lower-lying trails, making them accessible to bikers far earlier than usual.

"I was riding in April and people were coming in from far and wide," Fussell said. "That was both amazing and kicked us into high gear."

George Merrill, along with his father Peter, opened up Hitchhiker Bikes this year just in time to capitalize on the post-COVID bike

Nick Bennette, the executive director for the Vermont Mountain Bike Association — he's sort of the statewide analog to Fussell in Stowe — echoed Fussell that climate change is changing the face of ski towns. As a result, places like Mount Snow, Killington and Sugarbush have, for years, offered lift-assisted

downhill mountain biking to their summer-time repertoire.

This summer Bolton Valley joins the club, Bennette said. Stowe still remains a wait-and-see proposition, although rumors have flown about

proposed routes down Mansfield and Vail Resort management has hinted that it's a long term goal.

Bennett said the ability to turn a ski resort from a winter place to an all-season destination has helped a sometimes-struggling industry, giving them a chance to run the

lifts and lodges for longer.

Fussell and Bennette have spent time in other mountain bike destinations, such as the Pacific Northwest and the Red Rock areas of Utah. There are two key differences to biking in Vermont.

For one, Bennett said, Vermont's small towns are already so close, so intertwined with the nearby forests that the bikers can often just pop out of a trail and cycle to a bar or restaurant for a post-ride meal or drink. And the local businesses tend to form a symbiotic relationship with the local recreation scene.

The other is the straight up "flavor" of the riding area. Utah is slickrock and dusty desert, the Rockies are all about the switchbacks. Vermont's biking scene is sort of like the hiking scene, straight up roots and granite, mossy rocks with nary a switchback to find — odd that the state's most popular brewery is named Switchback.

"I love our rocks and I love our roots," Fussell said. "I have such a fun time puzzling over how to approach our trails."

"I LOVE OUR ROCKS AND I LOVE OUR ROOTS. I HAVE SUCH A FUN TIME PUZZLING OVER HOW TO APPROACH OUR TRAILS."

— Rachel Fussell

boom. The company — located in the Baggy Knees shopping center — started last summer as a mobile, pick-up-and-drop-off bike shop, and business has been brisk.

"There's such a big demand for getting outside," George Merrill said.

On the trail: Dos and don'ts

Most of these things are obvious — all it takes is respect for other riders, trail users and nature — but just in case, some reminders from a mix of different MTB organizations.

- 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. Don't trespass.

9 **RIDE** in control and within your limits.

10 **YIELD** appropriately. Let 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, Vermont Mountain Bike Association, International Mountain Biking Association.



FILE PHOTO

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On the flats

Rail trails, bike paths offer more casual outdoor experience

by Kate Carter

Biking a harrowing run of singletrack can be exhilarating, but some people just prefer a casual walk, a flat run or a place to push the baby jogger.

Good news. Vermont has rejuvenated rail trails and rec paths throughout the state perfect for the more casual outdoors person. Rail trails have crushed stone gravel surfaces while the rec paths are paved. Check websites for interactive maps, access points and amenities to keep you refreshed along the way. This summer, make it a goal to do them all!

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail

93 miles (33 currently open)

The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail extends across some of Northern Vermont's most beautiful landscapes. The trail spans the width of the state, from the Connecticut River Valley to within two miles of Lake Champlain. Thirty-three miles are open, and in 2020 the Vermont Legislature authorized funding to complete the trail by 2023.

The section from Morrisville to Jeffersonville runs parallel to the Lamoille River and has mountain and farmland views.

MORE INFO: lvrt.org.

Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail

26.3 miles

This crushed-stone rail trail is one of the longer and more scenic in the state, passing through the heartland of dairy farms and cornfields of northwestern Vermont, from St. Albans to the Canadian border. It follows the railbed of Central Vermont Railroad's Richford Branch, starting on the north side of Saint Albans and heading northeast to the terminus in Richford. Shortly after departing St. Albans, the trail passes through villages, cornfields, dairy farms, bridges, and a lot of red barns.

MORE INFO: mvrailtrail.org.

Stowe Rec Path

5.3 miles

The Stowe Recreation Path is an award-winning, internationally recognized greenway stretching from Stowe Village to Topnotch Resort on the Mountain Road, with numerous access points along the way. The path crosses the West Branch of Little River several

times on long, arching bridges designed specifically for the path. Views of Mount Mansfield are common, especially from the northern end. Access to restaurants, lodges, and local businesses make the bike path one of the most popular recreation assets in Stowe.

In the spring 2017, bike maintenance stations were installed at Lintilhac Park and Chase Park. They have all the tools necessary to perform basic maintenance, from changing a flat to adjusting brakes and derailleurs.

MORE INFO: stowerec.org.

Island Line Trail

14 miles

If you're keen on variety, this trail has a lot to offer, including one novel segment, the Colchester Causeway. It's one of the more unusual "trails" in Vermont, extending three miles into Lake Champlain, where the scenery is spectacularly aquatic.

The Island Line Trail was once the Central Vermont Railway, which was converted to a rec path in the 1970s. It's an easy trail that passes by beaches, parks and backyards, and offers great views of Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks.

Starting on the waterfront in Burlington, the trail heads north, skirting Lake Champlain, eventually reaching the aforementioned causeway. At the end of the causeway you can take Local Motion's Island Line Bike Ferry (seasonal) to cross "The Cut," a 200-foot gap in the causeway, with South Hero on its far side.

MORE INFO: localmotion.org

Montpelier to Wells River

23 miles

This rail trail passes through Groton State Forest, which comprises more than 26,000 acres and lies halfway between Barre and St. Johnsbury. For nearly 200 years the area was heavily logged, and at one point lumber was transported via trains that traversed the forest from Montpelier to Wells River.

The trail extends uninterrupted, except for occasional road crossings, from Ricker Pond to Plainfield. For a forested ride that passes by ponds, bogs and meadows, begin at the south end of Ricker Pond on Vermont Route 232, at a designated parking area. Ride as far as you want and turn around at any time.

MORE INFO: bit.ly/3gXgaYB



PHOTO COURTESY OF LOCAL MOTION

Colchester Causeway, part of the Island Line Trail along Lake Champlain.

Route 127 Path

3.2 miles (one way)

This recreational path is situated north of downtown Burlington and South of Colchester and passes by wetlands, natural areas and the Winooski River. It connects Burlington's Old North End to the New North End, and links suburbs and parks, and passes by the Ethan Allen Homestead, which features a museum and year-round events. While primarily for recreation, the path offers opportunities to spot wildlife on the Intervale, including a wide variety of birds.

A portion of the Route 127 Path

is part of the Burlington Wildway Trail. The trail heads south into Ethan Allen Park from the path and through the Ethan Allen Homestead to the east on its way to Salmon Hole Park. It's definitely worth exploring.

MORE INFO: enjoyburlington.com

SoBu Recreation Path

26 miles

A collaboration between the residents in South Burlington and the town resulted in this 26-mile network of paved, off-street trails that skirt by neighborhoods, view points and Lake

Champlain. Overlook Park on Deerfield Road has stunning views of Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks in New York. It's a great place to watch the sunset.

Another segment winds through Farrell Park, a heavily forested oasis of greenery, while another section takes you through Red Rocks Park along the water, with great views of Lake Champlain and a popular swimming hole.

MORE INFO: bit.ly/3xQdK4y

Gravel Grind

Dirt gives cyclists new avenues for adventure

by Roger Murphy

Fantastic views, light traffic, history all around, welcoming people — no wonder bicyclists enjoy Vermont's 16,000 miles of roads.

Every spring, as soon as the snowbanks have melted, cyclists emerge in their Spandex, wheeling alone or in groups through valleys and farmland to famous passes like the Appalachian Gap in Fayston or Smugglers Notch in Stowe and Cambridge.

Increasingly, those cyclists are choosing to ride on Vermont's 8,650 miles of dirt road. They're much more peaceful, cars go more slowly, the landscape is largely untouched, and you can ride for hours without bumping into tourists.

Dirt roads have been a regular part of Vermont life — the way to get to school, to church, to the neighbor's house, to the post office. And, "dirt road" covers a huge range of quality. Some dirt roads are smooth and wide; others are barely more than a footpath.

For cyclists, dirt roads are a route into the Vermont that used to be — rural, unpretentious, sparsely settled. They take people where paved roads won't go.

"Most Vermonters, if they don't already live on a dirt road, have one in close proximity to their home," said Ryan Thibault, owner and editor of Mountain Bike Vermont. His group — an advocacy, event management and media production company — has helped to promote riding on dirt roads called "Gravel Grinders," cycling events held almost exclusively along dirt miles. They're not races, per se, but "group rides done in a mostly noncompetitive nature, although some people do push hard," he said.

Gravel Grinder is the major fundraiser of the year for the Waterbury Area Trail Alliance.

The alliance builds and maintains the mountain bike trail network in Waterbury, and hopes to one day connect to trails in Stowe, managed and maintained by the Stowe Trails Partnership.

Alex Showerman, who now lives in Golden, Colo., and former board member of the Waterbury group, loves the Gravel Grinder because "it brings the whole community together," up to 350 riders and lots of spectators. Many like to ride hard, but others are there to support the Waterbury Area Trail Alliance mission, or to take a long, meandering ride with friends, she said.

This year's grinder, which took

place in May, had two routes: 28 miles with 2,800 vertical feet of climbing, and "the Big Grind," 50 miles with even more climbing.

Lots of riders use gravel bikes — similar to a road bike but with more stable geometry and wider, more heavily treaded tires — while others enjoy the event on mountain bikes, fat bikes and tandem bikes. Some people run the route.

Vermont Bikepackers specializes in using dirt roads to link routes together on extended rides through the state.

The Bikepackers, a chapter of the Vermont Mountain Bike Association, maintain two routes. One is the XVT, the bikers' equivalent of the Long Trail; it runs 300 miles from the Massachusetts border to Canada. The other is the Super 8, which covers a 550-mile figure-8 around the state.

The XVT, conceptualized and laid out by avid riders David Tremblay and the late David Blumenthal, is usually ridden south to north, primarily on dirt roads and doubletrack mountain bike trails. About 10 percent of the route incorporates singletrack mountain bike trails in 10 distinct trail networks. For some variety, the route weaves through the Lincoln Gap, which is the steepest mile of paved road in America, with a maximum gradient of 24 percent.

The Super 8 uses some of the XVT route, but offers options for those who want to avoid the single-track — or when the singletrack should be avoided because of wet conditions. The Super 8 is intended primarily for a gravel bike, but many go by the "run what you bring" philosophy—whatever bike you own is the perfect bike for you.

Some riders carry camping equipment (that's where the name "bikepacking" comes from). Others map out day trips, piecing legs together so they eventually cover the entire distance — the way hikers piece together the Long Trail, and backcountry skiers the Catamount Trail.

Daniel Jordan is an evangelist for bikepacking, a sport he picked up out West, where it's booming.

He said Vermont Bikepackers organizers make sure that "the route goes past plenty of local general stores, which offer not just refreshment and food, but become part of the Vermont experience as well."

While the Bikepackers don't maintain any trails of their own, they do maintain the GPS files for both routes. The Super 8 is available free for download, since it uses

solely public roads, and the XVT is available for club members.

"We intend to use the money collected from members for signage and to eventually help support the trail networks utilized by

the XVT," Jordan said.

The XVT has gained the notice of record-seekers, but you can move at your own pace, making your own decisions about taking on tough terrain.

What's true for every rider is this: Getting off the pavement delivers a remarkably different experience. All you need is a bike of some sort, a sense of adventure and a willingness to slow down a bit.



ABOVE, PHOTO BY DANIEL JORDAN;
AT LEFT, PHOTO BY TRISTAN VON DUNTZ



Above, Vermont offers unlimited miles of gravel to ride, from abandoned roads through the forest to countless graveled back roads.

At left, minimalist gear laid out for a bikepacking trip into Groton State Forest. Since you carry it all on the bike, wise packing is imperative.



THANK YOU!

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 2021, 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!

www.stowetrails.org

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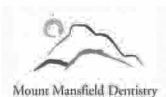
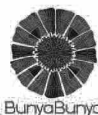
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Special thanks to the Stowe Reporter for supporting mountain biking in Stowe and helping to promote the Stowe Trails Partnership.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GREEN MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUB

Get out on the road with Green Mountain Bicycle Club

by Phyl Newbeck

Although mountain biking is increasingly popular, many of us still prefer to pedal on skinny tires.

For over 50 years, the Green Mountain Bicycle Club has offered cyclists the option of getting out on the road with friends. Most GMBC rides are on pavement, but lately the club has been adding gravel

roads to the roster. The club's mission is to promote cycling for fitness and friendship, encourage safe, courteous riding practices, organize weekly rides and competitive events, and advocate for cyclists at the state and local level.

With almost 300 members, the club offers a little bit for everybody, including introductory rides for new riders in the early part of the

season. The most popular options are Sunday touring rides, which take place from April to October. Rides take place in Addison, Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle and Lamoille counties, as well as two-day trips to the Upper Valley and Northeast Kingdom.

One early season ride visits three Chittenden County covered bridges but that is topped by one

later in the season that features almost a dozen of these historic gems in Franklin and Lamoille counties. A popular midseason ride in Washington County skips the bridges but offers views of three different waterfalls.

Each ride has a leader and sweeper and includes at least one designated rest stop. Riders generally regroup at major intersections

to make sure nobody is left behind. Routes get longer and hillier as the summer progresses and the season culminates in a 100-mile ride in September. Many of the touring rides also feature a social ride component for those who prefer a more leisurely pace with longer breaks. And, for those itching to go a little faster and up a few more hills, there are Saturday training rides.

The club also hosts two weekly evening rides. Tuesday night rides, which start from several different locations, are geared solely for racers and can include 25-plus mph pace lines.

Wednesday night rides start from Veterans Memorial Park in South Burlington and follow the same 28-mile route every week.

Riders are divided into groups based on pace with the A group averaging over 22 mph and the C group between 15 and 17.

"Before our Wednesday rides, we review riding etiquette and elements of safe riding," said club vice president John Williams. "Riders gain confidence, friends and fitness through participation in the Wednesday ride."

The club also has something for those who want to test their skills against others. Every Thursday from May to September there are time trials where cyclists race the clock and each other. Courses range from 6 to 16 miles and include both flat routes and hill climbs. Stowe Bike Club is the only other local group holding similar events. Their time trial series is held every other Wednesday from May through August.

Itching to get out on the roads? Check out thegmbc.com and come for ride.

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July 10 – Bike

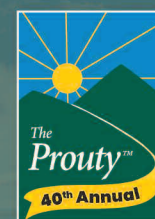
20-mile ride in Hanover, NH

July 11 – Walk

5k residential walk in Hanover, NH

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Rules of the road

The League of American Bicyclists' five rules of the road prepare you for safe and fun bicycling no matter where you're riding

ing, chain runs smoothly and quick release levers are closed. Carry tools and supplies appropriate for your ride. Wear a helmet.

FOLLOW THE LAW

You have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers. Obey traffic signals and stop signs. Ride with traffic, use the right-most lane headed in the direction you're traveling.

BE PREDICTABLE

Make your intentions clear to everyone on the road. Ride in a straight line and don't swerve between parked cars. Signal turns, and check behind you well before turning or changing lanes.

BE CONSPICUOUS

Ride where people can see you and wear bright clothing. Use a front white light, red rear light and reflectors when visibility is poor. Make eye contact with others and don't ride on sidewalks.

THINK AHEAD

Anticipate what drivers, pedestrians and other people on bikes will do next. Watch for turning vehicles and ride outside the door zone of parked cars. Look out for debris, potholes and other road hazards. Cross railroad tracks at right angles.

RIDE READY

Check that your tires are sufficiently inflated, brakes are work-



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RIDE



FILE PHOTO

Bike sense

International Mountain Biking Association

These guidelines for responsible riding have been adopted by land-management agencies nationwide. Actions have critical impacts on the landscape, trails, animals, and other trail users.

Pledge to ride friendly, ride prepared, ride responsibly, ride lightly.

RESPECT THE LANDSCAPE

Respect your local trail builders and be a good steward of the physical environment. Keep singletrack single by staying on the trail. Practice Leave No Trace principles. Do not ride muddy trails because it causes rutting, widening and maintenance headaches. Ride through standing water, not around it. Ride (or walk) technical features, not around them.

SHARE THE TRAIL

Most trails we ride are multi-use. Mountain bikers yield to horses and foot traffic, and descending riders yield to climbing riders. This yield triangle has been formally adopted by land managers since the late 1970s and is a significant reason why we have the access we do. There are some regional differences and unique rules on single-use, directional mountain bike trails — know the code where you ride. Be nice. Say hi.

RIDE OPEN, LEGAL TRAILS

Poaching trails, building illegal singletrack or adding unauthorized trail features are detrimental to access. Poorly built features can seriously injure other trail users. If you believe there aren't enough trails or variety near you, it's time

to get involved. It takes a village to create, enhance and protect great places to ride.

RIDE IN CONTROL

Speed, inattentiveness and rudeness are the primary sources of trail conflict among user groups. If you need to pass, slow down, ring a bell or verbally announce yourself, and wait until the other trail user is out of the path. Use extra caution around horses, which are unpredictable. Be extra aware when riding trails with poor sight lines and blind corners, and make sure you can hear what's going on around you.

PLAN AHEAD

Be prepared and self-sufficient. Every mountain biker should carry what they need for the ride they're undertaking, and know how to fix a flat tire and make minor repairs. Download a GPS trail app on your phone for navigation or carry a map in unfamiliar locations. Ride with a partner, or share your riding plan with someone if you're heading out solo. Always wear a helmet.

MIND THE ANIMALS

When it comes to wildlife, live and let live. In some places, running cattle and disturbing wildlife are serious offenses. If you want to ride with your dog, first find out whether or not it's allowed by looking up the leash laws and trail restrictions. Be prepared to take care of your dog. Ensure your companion is obedient enough to not cause problems for you, other trail users or wild animals.



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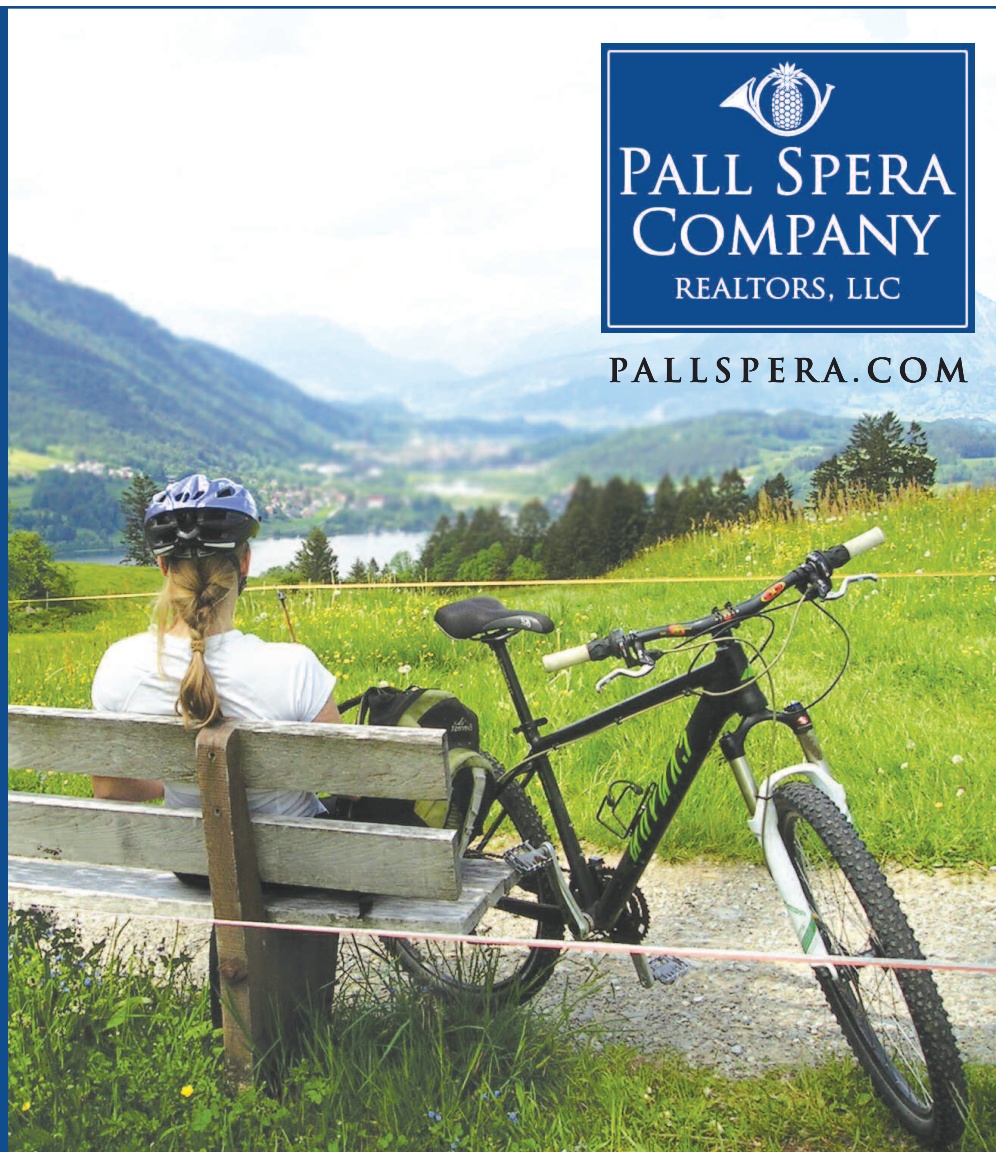
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