

December 8, 2023

Dear Friends,

We hope you've had a good year of outdoor fun on Vermont's great network of trails despite the summer rains. The July 10-11 flood was the big news for the Cross Vermont Trail.

We're happy to say that our practice of *Build Back Better* paid off when all the large bridges, culverts and trail segments we rebuilt after Tropical Storm Irene held fast—hurray! The Johnny Brook Bridge and trail in Richmond is a good example of this smart re-build. The new Winooski River Bridge in East Montpelier was designed with climate-driven storms in mind, and it stayed solid on its abutments—pewh!

"Storm damage across all the variety of local trails CVTA helps to maintain was extensive but not insurmountable" reports our Executive Director Greg Western. After the storm he was busy all of the rest of the year from Richmond to Wells River on restoration work. Money we had on hand from your past donations allowed us to quickly go into action, buying gravel and materials and renting equipment to clean up many smaller washouts and overwhelmed culverts.

Some segments of the Cross Vermont Trail took bigger hits, however. You may have noticed the slumped trail railing above the Winooski River in East Montpelier where our shared path with Route 2 is located. The river undercut its steep bank here, but VTrans has pledged to reinstall the path after they finish shoring up the riverbank. Other partners we are supporting as they do large scale storm response projects are Groton State Forest and the Town of Marshfield. CVTA played an important role to advocate that trail repair be considered in these organizations' larger storm response.



Major structures like the Winooski Bridge did well in the big storm, but there were uncountable smaller washouts to repair. After finishing all that this Fall, we are ready to resume progress on new trail construction in East Montpelier next Spring.

We're pleased that our trail projects built over the last ten years have proven resilient. We're also aiming for resiliency in our organization by growing our financial resources so that we can hire paid seasonal staff as needed at a reasonable wage. This past summer we had no applications for our AmeriCorps crew, usually the backbone of our summer season, so Greg had to rely on volunteers, and sometimes his own lonesome, to do the flood repair work.

*The purpose of the Cross Vermont Trail Association is to assist landowners, recreation groups, and municipalities in the creation and management of a four-season, multi-use trail across the state of Vermont – following the Winooski River and the Wells River – for public recreation, alternative transportation, and awareness of our natural and cultural heritage.
We support local community trails and work to make the Cross Vermont Trail a connection among them.*

The amount of trail we're responsible for is growing, and so too must our organizational capacity grow. Just this past summer we opened an important new section of the old railbed as a formal trail heading out from Plainfield Village to Marshfield. This was the result of investing much careful time in working together positively with landowners, and then being able to spend the money needed to upgrade the trail once permission was given. We continue our program of annual outreach to landowners who may someday become Cross Vermont Trail partners and aim to report on many more new sections of trail in the coming years.



Volunteer groups are always an important part of how we work. But to fully build for the future CVTA relies on your donation to help pay for dedicated staff.

Please help us to grow as a sustainable trail organization, ready to meet the challenges of weather events, new trail construction and existing trail maintenance. Your generosity at this time will help ensure that the Cross Vermont Trail and many side trails continue to improve and grow, in great shape into the future, for the people of all the communities — geographic and otherwise — that together form the vibrant network of the Cross Vermont Trail!

With our best wishes for 2024!

Sincerely,

Mike Thomas
CVTA Board Chair

Rose Paul
CVTA Board Secretary

P.S. Our annual meeting next year will be Saturday July 20 in Groton. It's a low key chance to meet other trail enthusiasts and share your ideas too. It will also be a time to check out and celebrate some major upgrades to the Cross Vermont Trail on the railbed underway now, which we are doing together with major partner the Town of Groton. Stay tuned for details, everyone welcome!



Your donation builds more trail.

We invite you to be a 2024 contributing member of CVTA with a donation of any amount.

\$ _____ amount enclosed. *Thank You!*

PO BOX 116
Montpelier, VT 05601

Secure online donation at
<https://crossvermont.org>

name: _____

address: _____

email: _____

2023 Flood Response

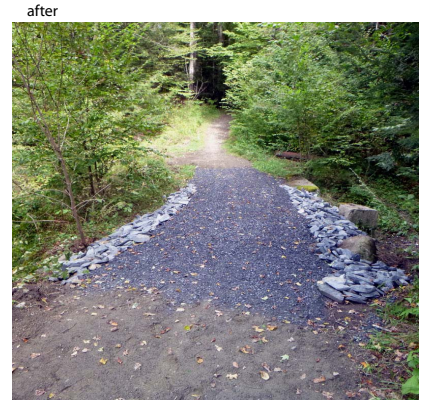
More photos of gullies and gravel.



In Richmond, the Johnnie Brook boardwalk was buried but unbroken.



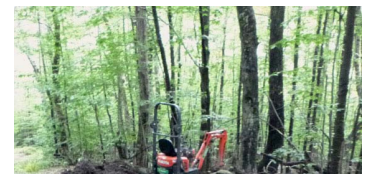
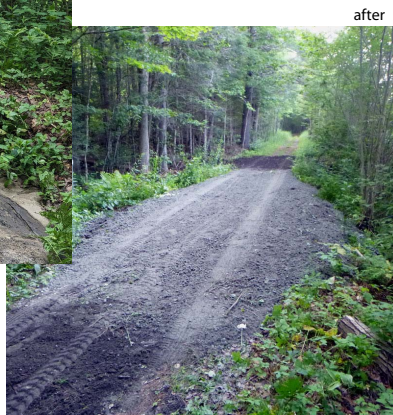
On our newly opened section of railtrail between Plainfield Village and Marshfield, CVTA reconstructed a large washed out culvert.



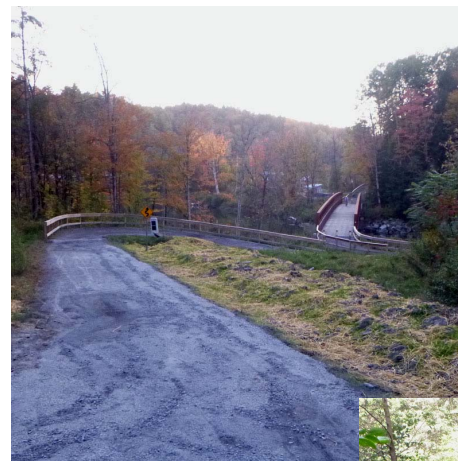
In Groton State Forest CVTA continued our long tradition of helping to build out and maintain the full multi-use path network. After the storm we rebuilt this damaged segment of the (poetically named) Rail Trail Connector Trail.



In Groton, south of Rickers Mill, CVTA took the lead to repair this large wash out.



The Cross Vermont Trail located on the Montpelier & Wells River railbed where the town owns the old bed in Marshfield was heavily impacted - exposing the rail ties! The town has completed a major rebuild this Fall. Next year CVTA will work with the town to complete further improvements at the trailhead here, and also to upgrade additional sections of the railbed elsewhere.



This Fall we resurfaced and graded all of the recently constructed but then storm damaged segments of the new trail on either side of the Winooski Bridge.

In Wells River, CVTA Board Chair Mike Thomas dressed up to reset a storm damaged boardwalk.



CVTA is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who set the direction of the organization through adopted policies and plans. Our mission has always been trails for all, and this year we went ahead and spelled that out more fully with a formal Board policy on our approach to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Statement of Our Values

We are trail builders and maintainers. Our vision is trails that are inviting to people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

We support community trails convenient to where people live, work, go to school and enjoy the outdoors. Ultimately our goal is to join local trails together as a useful network with the Cross Vermont Trail a connection among them; across Vermont from Lake Champlain to the Connecticut River through the Winooski and Wells River valleys, with access for four season non motorized use.

We commit to this goal because we believe it has immense, multi-layered value for the people who use the trail, the property owners and businesses nearby, the communities through which it travels, and Vermont broadly; and that these values should accrue to people regardless of their age, ability, gender, ethnicity, race, socio-economic status or other distinguishing characteristics.

Therefore the values of diversity, equity and inclusion are essential to our work. We understand these values to mean:

- Diversity is the full range of people and communities who would visit our trails if barrier free and welcoming.
- Equity is barrier free places that allow for different ways of use depending on each person's needs and circumstances so all can enjoy the same opportunity for the benefits of our trails.
- Inclusion ensures people feel a sense of belonging, that they are welcome.

We will strive for barrier free and welcoming access for all people to our trails by:

- Seeking and listening to the full array of communities and user groups who would potentially access our trails and learning from them the barriers they find so we can understand what is needed to remove those barriers.
- Building and maintaining trails by design principles that accommodate people with all sorts of previous familiarity or practice and levels of physical strength. We strive to follow standards for slope, width, surface and related parameters to make trails that are safe and intuitive to use. Our mission is non-motorized access to trails for walking, biking, cross country skiing and the like, including people doing these activities with mobility assistive devices.
- Communicating clearly and positively. Signs, maps and trail guides that are functional to the full range of how trail users perceive information. Physical spaces such as trailheads whose presentation has a feeling of being welcoming and open to the public. Providing objective information that empowers people to assess trails for themselves based on their own requirements and interests.
- Locating trails throughout our communities with direct connections to neighborhoods and destinations of all economic levels.
- Hiring staff and recruiting volunteers, that operate our organization, in a way which also incorporates the values of diversity, equity and inclusion following standard best practices.