

# CROSS VERMONT TRAIL

PO BOX 116, MONTPELIER VT 05601 | 802-498-0079 | [www.crossvermont.org](http://www.crossvermont.org)

## 2019 has been quit a year on the Cross Vermont Trail

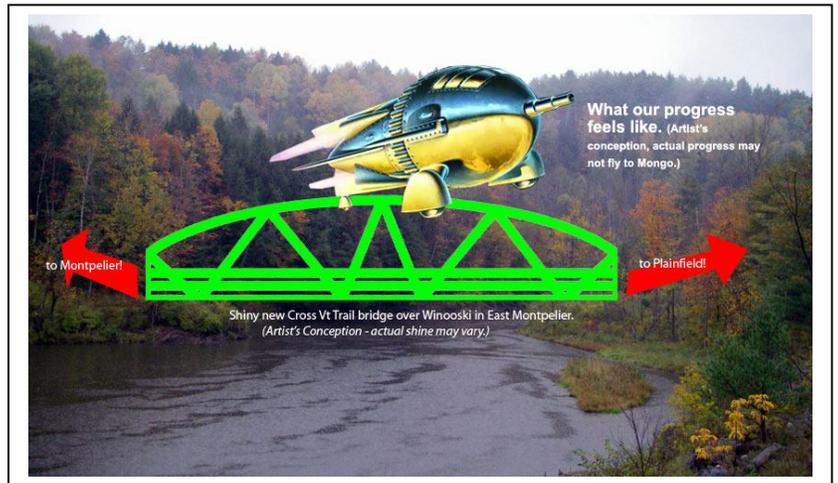
Amazing news: In November we celebrated the opening of the newest section of the Cross Vermont Trail - Montpelier's "Siboinebi Path". And in the weeks following, we received an outpouring of nearly \$50,000 in charitable contributions from individuals, people who want to see the bike path continued and the big Cross Vermont Trail project across East Montpelier finally built.

*This letter is our annual update to you about our work, and appeal for donations to help us do this work. Thank you for your past support! If you haven't donated lately, now is a great time to do so. We have a giant list of projects queued up for 2020, and will need to hit the ground running.*

## Build the Bridge

We are cleared for construction! The Winooski Bridge and miles of new trail - Act 250 and all permits are final, easements and State land permissions are fully executed, engineering is done. Construction will begin in 2020, simple as that.

We will "keep the Montpelier bike path going" - up to U-32 and across East Montpelier towards where the rail trail starts on Route 14. *Want detail on what exactly is happening and where? Go to the enclosed map, and Times-Argus article (and song lyrics too, why not).*



This has been years. It's a ferociously technically challenging spot - where the Winooski River valley is narrow - and the engineering and permitting needed to "thread the needle" made for a big job. The final permits have arrived in just the past week. We told you in last year's annual letter that they would be done in 2019, and we made it - down to the wire, but across the finish line.

## Fundraising is Ongoing

Starting in 2020 we will begin building miles of new trail and a big bridge over the Winooski River. But would you believe that a spike in steel prices due to tariffs, and other factors, means that fundraising is still ongoing? We will start construction with the money we have, starting first with phases that we can afford, and will continue to build piece by piece until fundraising is complete.

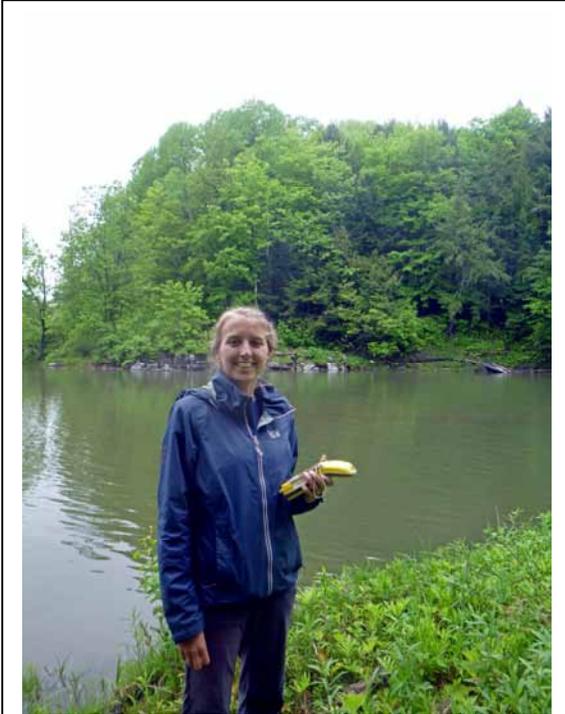
*For years now we've had a goal of raising \$250,000 in local donations to match larger government grants and as of today we have \$250,000 in our restricted account ready for construction. Thank you to everyone who has donated; incredibly we are pulling off this major project in a grass roots manner.*

The construction cost estimate for the full project is now 1.6 million dollars, including the recent price jump. This means that even though we have nearly a million dollars in federal grants committed to the construction phase, plus our local match in the restricted account, we still have a shortfall of well over six figures. We are sure we can make up most of this shortfall with government grants, and are applying for them aggressively. But in addition, we will need to raise contributions from individuals, businesses and other donors to match the additional government grant money.

*To be blunt, we need a \$54,000 more in local donations to complete the fundraising and build the full project that is permitted by Act 250, ready to start construction as soon as the ground thaws: the big bridge and the 4.1 miles of trail that tie the Cross Vt Trail to U-32 and on across East Montpelier.*

## The Big Picture

The big Winooski Bridge project is the keystone piece of the statewide Cross Vermont Trail route. It is the most expensive and difficult construction project we will ever face, but just a part of the larger vision for a network of community greenway paths, connecting villages, schools, and conserved natural areas, across Vermont following the Winooski River and the Wells River.



2019 Americorps Member Katherine McCool making GPS map for Winooski Bridge permit application. (It costs CVTA \$2,400 per year to host an Americorps member.)

Our larger Vision:

- family friendly recreation for people of all ages and abilities
- safe travel to school and work for non-motorized commuters
- convenient location for daily exercise and healthy outdoor activity
- a permanent greenway for easy local access to the natural world

*We advance this vision with daily work over the course of every year. We want to tell you now that your donation today will also help with this important work. Each year we spend about \$10,000 from local membership donations in order to be able to do the basics*

- *pay for things like liability insurance to protect landowners who allow the trail;*
- *pay for small but incrementally important upgrades to trails, gravel for muddy spots, railing for boardwalks, simply mowing and clearing brush including invasive plants;*
- *and logistics costs of hosting our annual volunteer and youth corps crews (which I'd like to be able to say is mostly the cost of vegetables, but in truth a fair amount is for Little Debbies).*

Go to [www.crossvermont.org](http://www.crossvermont.org) for state wide maps and detailed route descriptions.

### **Progress in 2019 on the bigger picture, and more projects ready to go in 2020**

East Montpelier, new trail easement: We signed purchase and sale agreement with Fairmont Farm to buy a trail easement that will directly continue from the 'big project' associated with the Winooski Bridge. This will mean another 3/4 miles of new trail. Grants from Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) and from East Montpelier Conservation Fund will pay for this easement, and the closing is scheduled for early in 2020.

Plainfield, new property conserved for greenway: We purchased in August an 11.6 acre property along the Winooski River which will form a critical link in the future trail network. Planning for public recreation access to this property is underway this winter (give a call if you want to learn more or get involved.) Purchase of this property, which is now permanently protected with a Conservation Easement, was funded by VHCB and the Plainfield Conservation Fund.

Richmond: Johnnie Brook Trail, this has become by far one of the most popular sections of the Cross Vermont Trail route. Many days that I am out there folks pass by with panniers and lots of gear (and french accents a lot of the time, sure) obviously on longer bike packing trips - great to see! The Halloween 2019 storm was not kind to Richmond, and while much of the trail improvements that we made after Irene, with the idea of making a sustainable flood resilient trail, worked well in the 2019 storm, not all did. So, once more to the breach, I think we'll get it right this time.

East Montpelier "the Big Washout": The new trail to bypass the big washout of the railbed in East Montpelier began construction in 2019. Many local donors have helped with this project - see our website for the list. Last summer we built a good foundation, and will be back to finish summer 2020. This is a good volunteer project for anyone interested in carpentry or dry stone masonry - give a shout to get on the work party mailing list.

Wells River: A major overhaul of the Cross Vermont Trail on the railbed is underway, as well as an upgrade of the trails that join it to Blue Mountain Union School and to conserved land along the river. Funded with a State grant and also contributions individuals made via the Vt Community Foundation, this is the biggest project we've done in many years (which is to say, now I know what 42 dump truck loads of gravel looks like sitting all together, in the clear slanting light of the November sun) and will be finished up early summer 2020 - come check it out then!

And beyond: the real job is to talk with landowners who are interested in the possibility of working with CVTA to have public trails on their land. We are actively engaged in many conversations, and hope to have more good news in the coming year. Meanwhile if you are a landowner or know one with an interest in trails, give us a call any time.



## **Cross Vermont Trail Association Board of Directors**

The CVTA's active Board is a key to our ability to do good work, and this hands on group really fleshes out the organization, allowing us to get by efficiently and with just part time staff. In 2019 we'd like to give a hearty acknowledgement to some long time Board members who have stepped down after years of work with CVTA - Keith Swann, Bill Merrylees and Jeff Cohen. Thanks guys!

And, we welcome to the Board new member Dan Towle, who comes to Montpelier via Connecticut where he first got the trail bug on the 80 mile Farmington Valley Trail - since the Cross Vermont Trail route is 90 miles, it's fair to say Dan is moving up in the world.

*There are more open seats on the Board. Do you know someone, of any age or background, who wants to get involved in the nitty gritty and make a difference they can see? Send them our way!*

Sincerely,



Greg Western, Executive Director, and the CVTA Board.

- Rick Hopkins, Treasurer, East Montpelier
- Kim McKee, Chair, Calais
- Collin Oneil, Northfield
- Rose Paul, Secretary, Plainfield
- Ben Rose, Williston
- Mike Thomas, Vice Chair, Wells River
- Dan Towle, Montpelier

### **P.S. Mark your calendars for 2020 CVTA Events**

- Central Vermont Cycling Tour - June 28, 2020
- Groton Forest Marathon - September 12, 2020
- Fall Foliage Ride - September 26, 2020
- . . . and maybe more, stay tuned!



2019 Foliage Ride

## ***Winooski Bridge Song:***

*Whether you run it, bike it, skate it in your  
non-motorized kind of way  
You like to get your steps in; go on walk-  
about mid-day  
Ride out of town, 'til the bike path hits an end  
Take a breath, then share the road with your  
high speed vehicle friends*

*Well my exercising, traveling bud, have we  
got news for you*

*There'll be a way to get out east between the river and Route 2  
Building more off-road trail, a big ol' bridge for your feet, your skis, your wheels  
Can't think of a better way to use four tons of steel*

*No bridge too far, it's only been a couple decades in the making  
Let's ditch our cars, this trail's a very worthwhile undertaking  
I'll take the bumpy south to north, but give me east to west  
If you like your slopes all gentle-like, then across Vermont is best*

*Let's get more access to the river, we'll connect it to the schools  
Interpretive signs, heck yes, and we'll make it multi-use  
The Federal Highway Administration thought we had plan with merit  
Let's get this Bridge over the river done, before we see more tariffs*

*I'm talking bridges-earned, never know what's round that Onion River bend  
Some easements for the right-of-way, some grant dollars to spend  
Oo-ooooh me, got permits from DEC  
Oo-ooooh my, hopeful for Act 250*

*No bridge too far, it's only been a couple decades in the making  
Let's ditch our cars, this trail's a very worthwhile undertaking  
Just help us get across the river and we'll connect the rest  
If you like to ride from town to town, then across Vermont is best*

*Trails are nice up in the mountains, the way up highs to the down lows  
But sometimes it's fine to ride the valley by the river, but off-road  
We just want to get you safely from point A to your point B  
No better way to get from the City out to East MontP... elier*

*No bridge too far, it's only been a couple decades in the making  
Let's ditch our cars, this trail's a very worthwhile undertaking  
We're excited bout the new built path, and all that's to come next  
If you like your trails right out your door then across Vermont is best*

*Construction coming next spring....*

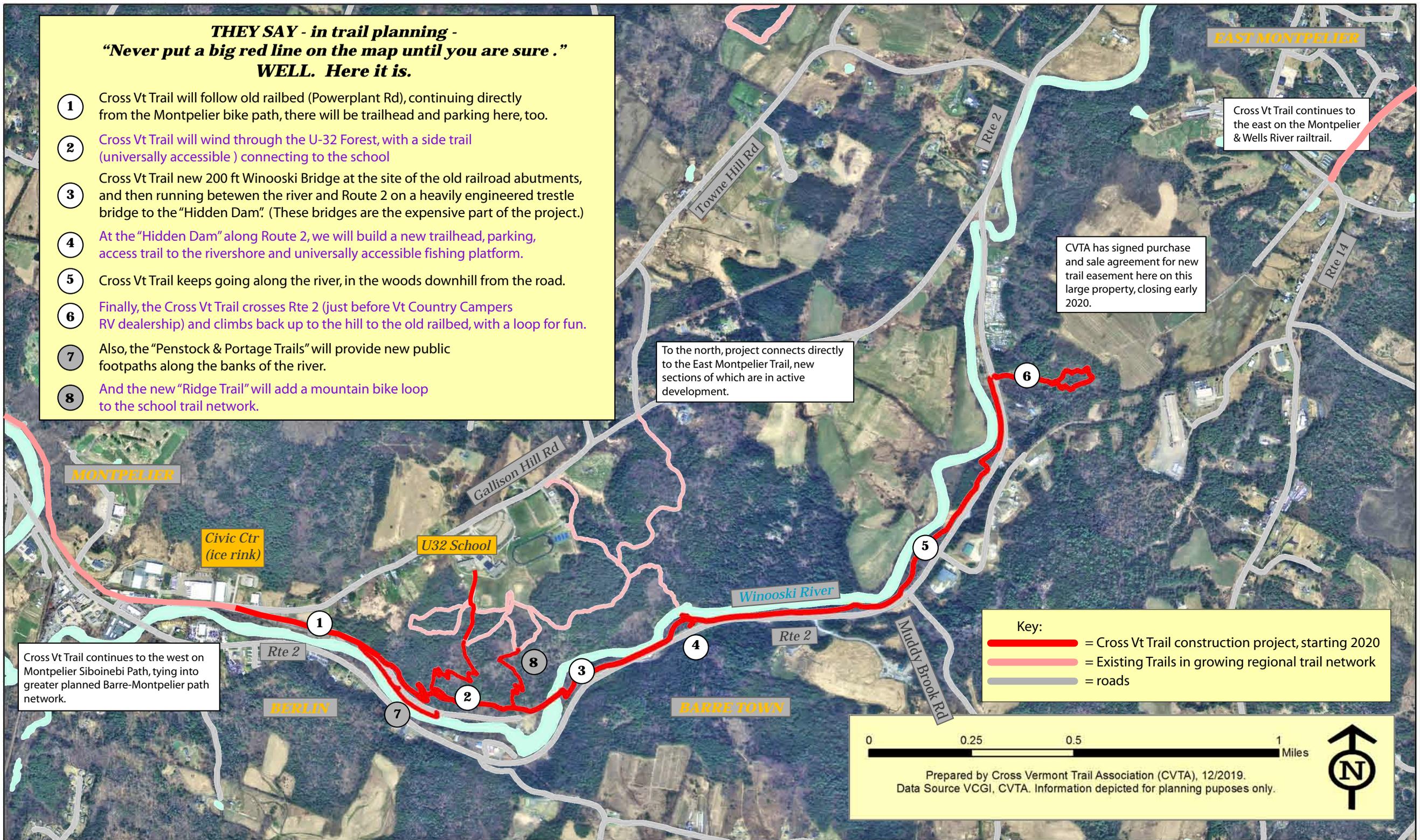
**Kim McKee writing, singing, banjo; Dave DiDomenico guitar and Colin McCaffrey fiddle.  
Hear the full performance, in harmony, posted up at [www.crossvermont.org](http://www.crossvermont.org)!**



Dave and Kim debuting the Winooski Bridge Song  
at the November celebration for opening of  
Montpelier's Siboinebi Path.

**THEY SAY - in trail planning -  
 "Never put a big red line on the map until you are sure ."  
 WELL. Here it is.**

- 1 Cross Vt Trail will follow old railbed (Powerplant Rd), continuing directly from the Montpelier bike path, there will be trailhead and parking here, too.
- 2 Cross Vt Trail will wind through the U-32 Forest, with a side trail (universally accessible ) connecting to the school
- 3 Cross Vt Trail new 200 ft Winooski Bridge at the site of the old railroad abutments, and then running between the river and Route 2 on a heavily engineered trestle bridge to the "Hidden Dam". (These bridges are the expensive part of the project.)
- 4 At the "Hidden Dam" along Route 2, we will build a new trailhead, parking, access trail to the rivershore and universally accessible fishing platform.
- 5 Cross Vt Trail keeps going along the river, in the woods downhill from the road.
- 6 Finally, the Cross Vt Trail crosses Rte 2 (just before Vt Country Campers RV dealership) and climbs back up to the hill to the old railbed, with a loop for fun.
- 7 Also, the "Penstock & Portage Trails" will provide new public footpaths along the banks of the river.
- 8 And the new "Ridge Trail" will add a mountain bike loop to the school trail network.



**EAST MONTEPELIER**

Cross Vt Trail continues to the east on the Montpelier & Wells River railtrail.

CVTA has signed purchase and sale agreement for new trail easement here on this large property, closing early 2020.

To the north, project connects directly to the East Montpelier Trail, new sections of which are in active development.

**MONTEPELIER**

Civic Ctr (ice rink)

U32 School

Gallison Hill Rd

Winooski River

Rte 2

Muddy Brook Rd

**BERLIN**

**BARRE TOWN**

Cross Vt Trail continues to the west on Montpelier Siboinibi Path, tying into greater planned Barre-Montpelier path network.

**Key:**

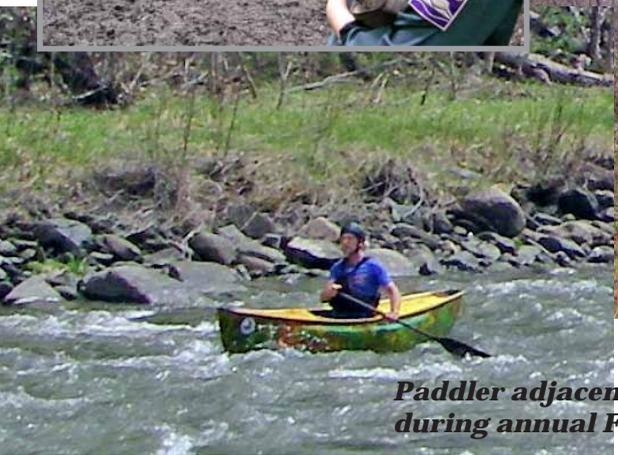
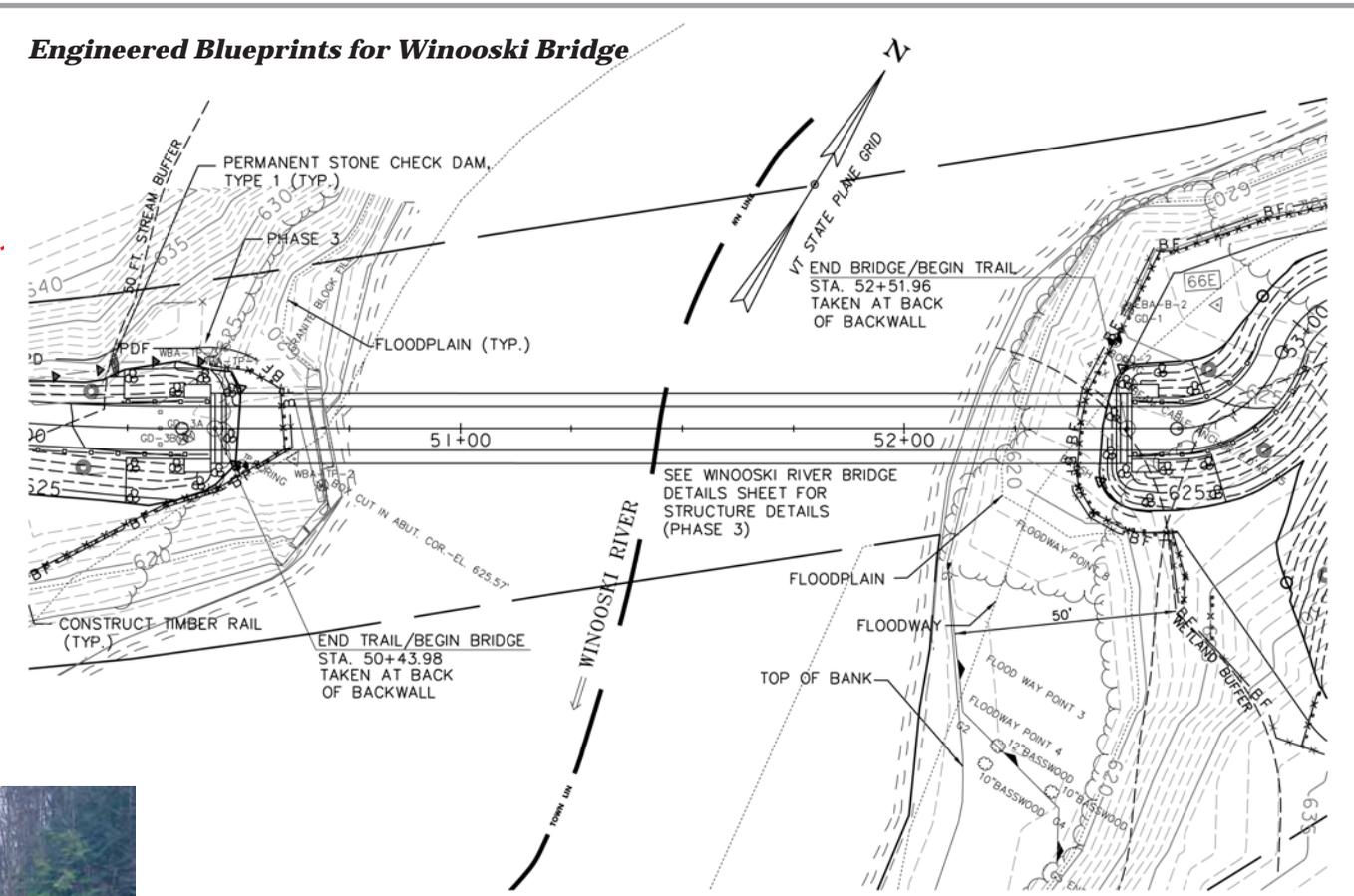
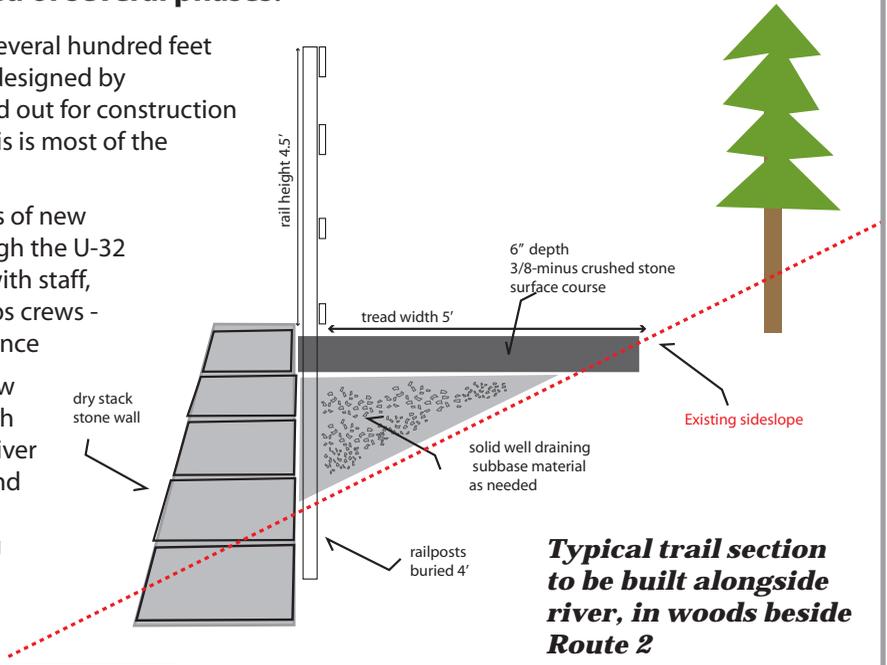
- = Cross Vt Trail construction project, starting 2020
- = Existing Trails in growing regional trail network
- = roads

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Prepared by Cross Vermont Trail Association (CVTA), 12/2019.  
 Data Source VCGI, CVTA. Information depicted for planning puposes only.

**The big project is composed of several phases:**

- \* the Winooski River Bridge, and several hundred feet of trestle bridge boardwalk are designed by Stantec Engineers and will be bid out for construction by conventional contractors - this is most of the total project cost
- \* CVTA will also build several miles of new universally accessible trail through the U-32 forest and along the Winooski, with staff, volunteer and conservation corps crews - this is most of the new trail distance
- \* the project also includes two new trailheads and parking areas, with numerous footpaths along the river for boating and fishing access and nature appreciation, as well as some new single track mt biking to make fun loops with the main trail



THE BARRE MONTPELIER

# TIMES ARGUS

WEEKENDER

\$3.00

NOVEMBER 9-10, 2019

WEATHER

High 35  
Low 15



LOCAL



**Gallery**  
The first snowfall of the season created plenty of issues — and beauty. **A6**

BUSINESS



**Buoyed by locals**  
After the closure of Green Mountain College this year, we check in with the state of Poultney's downtown. **B4**

PERSPECTIVE



**Climate dilemma**  
"...Vermont is not only failing to meet its goals; we are going backwards, and emissions have actually increased in recent years." **C7**

VT. ARTS



**'Postmodern Jukebox'**  
Modern songs, a jazz twist, and a rotating cast of more than 50 talented performers comes to Rutland's Paramount Theatre. **D1**

LOTTERY

CABALLERO MURDER TRIAL

## Witness testimony conflicts

By **ERIC BLAISDELL**  
STAFF WRITER

**BARRE** — An eyewitness in Jayveon Caballero's murder trial has given conflicting reports about what he heard.

Caballero, 31, of Barre, has been charged with first-degree murder in the fatal shooting of Markus Austin

in Montpelier in January 2017. He pleaded not guilty to the charge in August 2018, and is being held without bail at Southern State Correctional Facility in Springfield.

He faces a maximum sentence of life in prison.

The first day of the trial in Washington County Criminal Court in Barre

was Thursday with the state and Dan Sedon, Caballero's attorney, giving opening statements and the state presented some witnesses.

The trial continued Friday and one of the witnesses who testified saw what occurred shortly after the shooting.

According to court records, a witness told police Austin was shot

around 4:30 a.m. Jan. 22, 2017, in the parking lot outside his 191 Barre St. apartment in Montpelier. Austin died from a 9mm gunshot wound to the chest, according to police and court records.

Police said the shooting followed

See Caballero, page A4



JEB WALLACE-BRODEUR / STAFF PHOTO

Cyclists ride on a new section of the recreation path in Montpelier that opened Friday along the Winooski River east of Pioneer Street.

## 'Siboinebi Path' opens in Capital City

By **STEPHEN MILLS**  
STAFF WRITER

**MONTPELIER** — A new 1.9-mile section of the shared-use path in the Capital City was dedicated at a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday.

About 100 people turned out for the ceremony and ribbon-cutting.

The \$6 million project will connect to a Cross Vermont Trail project — another four miles of recreation trail through East Montpelier. It is hoped to break ground in the spring.

Montpelier now has four miles of

shared-use path: From the east side of the city at Dog River Road, passing through the newly opened Taylor Street Transit Center and across a new bridge over the North Branch river to Main Street. A short section of path, from Main Street and along Barre Street to the recreation center will need to be completed in the spring and will require eliminating 18 city parking spaces. From the recreation center, path users can connect with the shared-use path on Stone Cutters Way to the new section

from Granite Street and along Barre Street, Old Country Road and along the Winooski River to Gallison Hill Road, where it will connect with the proposed Cross Vermont Trail.

Ceremonies to celebrate the new path were held at the new Caledonia Spirits on Barre Street — a merciful reprieve from the cold weather for the scores of guests who attended the event.

During the chance to walk, ride or ski the path before the ribbon-cutting on Friday, Erika Mitchell and Seth

Frisbie, of Calais, of the self-styled Frizzle Mountain Unicycle Club, rode unicycles along the new stretch.

"We're having a grand time," said Mitchell. "This is a wonderful idea, and it's going to open up so much opportunity for this end of town. With the distillery here and Hunger Mountain Coop, it's going to be an anchor for a whole new part of town."

Frisbie added: "It's a wonderful resource and one of the things that

See Path, page A4

# Path

Continued from Page A1

makes Montpelier and central Vermont a nice place to live.”

Mayor Anne Watson helped guests to pronounce the Abenaki name of the path.

It will be called “Siboinebi Path” after a city contest to select a suitable name that was won this year by Jamie Carroll, assistant to the city manager. Siboinebi means “river water” and was chosen to reflect the original occupation of the city by the Abenaki Indians, and after consultation with the Abenaki Tribal Council by the Complete Streets Committee.

Watson noted the Chief Don Stevens of the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation could not be present but read a statement from him in which he noted that it was “refreshing” that Vermonters wanted to celebrate the Abenaki culture and use the tribe’s language to identify places.

Several members of the Nulhegan Abenaki Tribe who attended the event included Michael Descotaux, of Concord, Roland Bluto, of Milton, and brothers David Manning and Sgt. Dale Manning, who works for the Capitol Police Department.

Watson noted that the new section of path had been “many years in the making” and thanked voters who helped fund it, as well as city staff who worked on the project. She also acknowledged adjoining landowners who participated in the project.

“This path represents for us an alternative to using fossil-fuel vehicles as we get to work ... it represents better access for the business on the east side of town; it celebrates the river as it is so scenic and goes right along the river,” Watson said. “It’s

an opportunity for families to recreate; and it really puts Montpelier on the map as a destination for recreation.”

Jen Roberts, of Onion River Outdoors on Langdon Street, said the path was significant because it connected the city with its Abenaki history, allowed for the use of alternative transportation, created a “safer and prettier passage” between schools, and connected other city landmarks, neighborhoods and other communities.

“Our lovely new path checks the box for so many of the reasons people value their community,” Roberts said. “This path belongs to all of us. Let’s use it to our advantage and keep growing this network of multi-use paths.”

Kim McKee, chairwoman of the Cross Vermont Trail Board, noted that the Cross Vermont Trail is a 90-mile corridor spanning the Wells and Winooski river valleys that is a patchwork of on-and-off-trail segments.

McKee said with the completion of the Montpelier shared-use path, the Winooski Bridge project would be a four-mile section that extended upstream from Gallison Hill Road, and include building a 200-foot steel bridge across the Winooski River and connect to the U-32 trail network.

She said there had been steady progress in doing so over the past five years. Rights of way had been obtained from five landowners; permits had been obtained; and a draft Act 250 application for the project had been prepared. Some costs for the project had increased because of new steel tariffs, she added.

McKee ended by singing a song she wrote to commemorate the project, titled “Winooski Bridge Song” before participants and guests went outside for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

stephen.mills  
@timesargus.com

## Your donation builds more trail.

We invite you to be a **2020** contributing member of CVTA with a donation of any amount.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ amount enclosed. *thank you!*

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

CROSS VERMONT TRAIL ASSOCIATION

PO Box 116 29 MAIN STREET, SUITE 4

MONTPELIER VT 05601

Secure online donation available at

**[www.crossvermont.org](http://www.crossvermont.org)**

