

Cross Vermont Trail Association

PO Box 116
Montpelier, VT 05601

December 10, 2020

Dear Friends,

We have good news to share! The long-awaited Winooski Bridge on the Cross Vermont Trail in East Montpelier is under construction. The 200-foot long bicycle and pedestrian bridge is being built as we write this, with completion by our construction contractor expected next spring.

So many of you – local individuals who made donations to our Build the Bridge fund, landowners, municipalities, state agencies and more have helped us to get here, and we are deeply grateful. We are super excited to bring you this big new section of the Cross Vermont Trail, fulfilling our mission to connect communities, villages, schools and the natural areas in between.

The new bridge will allow us to join together miles of new trail to be built connecting from the end of Montpelier's Siboinebi Path at the Civic Center on Gallison Hill Road up to U-32 school and east across East Montpelier on a quiet path through the woods along the Winooski River—and away from busy Route 2 – and then up towards where the existing rail trail begins at Route 14.



The ceremonial groundbreaking of the Winooski Bridge construction on 9/18/20 was a beautiful day – and it was great to see dozens of people who have helped get us to this point in all different ways over the years coming together to share their stories and to celebrate.

We've got several summers of work ahead of us to get this all built – but it's a good kind work to have ahead. See the enclosed map and information sheet for more project details, and stay tuned to www.crossvermont.org for regular updates as things progress.

We need you

Please support us in this work by making an end-of-year donation. Individual contributions to the Cross Vermont Trail range from \$10 to several thousand dollars per person, and every single dollar counts to help us build and maintain the trail across the state. While we celebrate achieving this year the long time goal of fully funding the Winooski Bridge construction, the ongoing work of promoting, improving and extending local trails into a state wide network is full steam ahead. Your ongoing support makes a significant difference in realizing this vision.

Why CVTA?

Nationwide, fifty percent of Americans engage in outdoor recreation, but in Vermont, we know a much larger number of us rely on regular access to the outdoors for our health and happiness. The stark experience of this year's global pandemic and enforced social isolation have only made it more clear how important this is for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds – especially the kind of access that CVTA works to secure, which is convenient, local and free. With your help we can continue this work across the state, from Lake Champlain to the Connecticut River.

The Trail's Future

Looking ahead to 2021, the CVTA staff and board have launched a strategic planning process, facilitated by local consultant Lizann Peyton. Breaking ground to build our keystone Winooski Bridge project brings CVTA to an exciting crossroads, with the opportunity to define fresh focus on continuing the trail beyond the bridge, across Vermont! We are energized to conduct a planning process that will guide us and best align our efforts and resources based on prioritized goals for the next phase of completing our mission. We are going to need all hands and perspectives on deck. ***If you have thoughts to share about the strategic priorities for Cross Vermont Trail, or want to learn more about how to get involved in our upcoming planning effort***, contact Greg Western at greg@crossvermont.org or 498-0079.

At our celebratory ground-breaking ceremony for the Winooski River Bridge in September, we were thrilled to see, amidst the swarm of organizers, supporters and media, the U-32 cross country running team loping up the old railbed with Coach Mark Chaplin. These award-winning athletes will someday be the parents of young children themselves, and eventually the lifelong beneficiaries of the safe, pleasant gateway to the outdoors we are creating on the Cross Vermont Trail. ***Thank you for helping to make this vision a reality!***

Happy Trails,



Rose Paul, Board Secretary



Kim McKee, Board Chair

P.S. It was nice to see a number of you at last Fall's (modified and physically distanced) Foliage Ride in Groton. We are looking forward to ramping back up our event schedule in 2021, with appropriate health and safety measures in place. Pre-registration is now open for the Central Vermont Cycle Tour – "an original gravel grinder" June 27, 2021 – at <https://www.bikereg.com/cvct>.

2020 Trail Projects Report

Winooski Bridge

We have hired CCS Constructors out of Morrisville to build the bridge. Initial site prep is done, and deep foundation piles have been installed to support the abutments. Work on site is now paused while the bridge itself gets fabricated at a shop out of state. Once the bridge is ready for delivery, the final abutment work will happen, and then the big day when several large cranes lift everything into place! Some work could happen through the winter, with everything expected to be wrapped up next Spring.



Cross Vt Trail on the railbed in Newbury/Wells River

Together with Vt Dept of Forests, Parks and Rec (FPR) we have completed the rebuild of the rail trail between Boltonville and east past Blue Mt Union, including repairing various washouts of the bed, new crushed stone surfacing, improved trailhead parking, and more. *CVTA was able to leverage significant Federal funds from FPR by providing matching funds raised from*

local donations. Next year, we will branch out and upgrade the side trails in this area, especially the trail between the railbed and Blue Mt Union School.

Cross Vt Trail on Johnnie Brook Trail in Richmond

Extensive new boardwalk and bridging completed, and gravel surfacing. *The Town of Richmond came through with \$9,500 for cost of materials, while other donations to CVTA paid for labor and associated project costs. This project also made possible by significant hands on help from local volunteers.* We also partnered with the Vt Youth Conservation Corps to do restoration of a riparian area alongside the trail. We've been plugging away at Johnnie Brook for several years now, and it was good to complete this final push.



The "Big Washout" of Cross Vt Trail on railbed in East Montpelier, east of Rt 14

The last of the 2011 storm damage is finally being fixed. In 2018 we purchased a trail easement allowing us to build a relocation around "the big washout", and since then we have been designing, permitting and raising funds. As of this Fall, we have built the permanent new bridge, and a useable trail is in place.

This bridge cost about \$15,000 for materials and equipment rental, all of which was donated by local individuals and businesses. This project also was made possible by significant hands on help from local volunteers. Next spring we will return to complete the full bypass relocation and bring the trail up to multi-use accessibility standards.

Cross Vt Trail on the railbed Groton State Forest

The rail trail throughout the State Forest, from Marshfield Pond to Ricker Pond, has had a major upgrade, resurfaced and with additional repair work being done where needed. This had a well over six figure project cost, all of which was secured by the State Forest – they definitely see the value that we all place in the railbed as a greenway trail, and are responding accordingly.



Important land conservation project in East Montpelier

With tremendous technical assistance from the Vermont Land Trust and with funding assistance from the Town of East Montpelier, we closed this summer on an important trail corridor easement – on the "Haven" property of Fairmont Farm. Looking to the future, conversations are ongoing with additional landowners, and we hope to have more even more new easements to report in the coming year.



Ongoing stewardship and maintenance

Each year we also continue to provide regular care for a growing portfolio of trails and natural areas – doing spot maintenance, installing informational signs, controlling invasive plants, and more. One recent addition to our list is a partnership with the Middlesex Conservation Commission at the "3 Mile Bridge River Conservation Park" along the Cross Vt Trail route just west of Montpelier.

Summer AmeriCorps Crew

This year we hosted a three person crew from the Vt Housing and Conservation Board AmeriCorps program. Emily, Kate and Monte spent all summer laboring on trail projects across the State – thanks guys! The bigger picture is that every year we aim to work as much as possible with AmeriCorps, Youth Corps, school groups, and other volunteer groups. It's not just a scam to take advantage of low priced youth labor (though it is that too), the real goal is to always be ready to provide the next generation a chance to get out on trails and learn how to care for them and to invite them to take ownership in their own right.



check in periodically for updates at crossvermont.org

Cross Vermont Trail 2020-2023 construction project.

- 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 stretch of new bike path to the "Hidden Dam". (Together, 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, universally accessible fishing platform, and portages.
- 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, which will also serve as portages for river paddlers.
- 8 And the new "Ridge Trail" will add a dramatic single track mountain bike loop as a new feature to the school trail network.

To the north, project connects directly to the **East Montpelier Trail**, new sections of which are in active development. Including connection between Schoolhouse Rd and existing trail on conserved nature preserve, and beyond eventually to other towns in U-32 school district.

EAST MONTPELIER

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

Fairmont Farm
"Haven" Property

U-32 is a regional 7-12 grade school serving towns of Berlin, Calais, Middlesex, East Montpelier and Worcester (and some students from Orange and Washington.) The school forest paths network are widely used by both students and the general community. Cross Vermont Trail project will directly connect with and expand these trails, tying them into the growing area wide trail network.

East of Route 2, Cross Vt Trail will pass through Village of East Montpelier, with direct trail access to several neighborhoods, including 57 homes dedicated to affordable housing owned by The Housing Trust and also Habitat for Humanity.

MONTPELIER

Community
Civic Center

U-32 School

Gallison Hill Rd

Schoolhouse Rd

Winooski River

Rte 2

Muddy Brook Rd

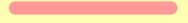
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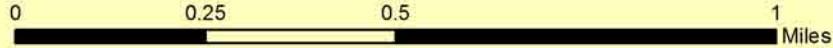
BARRE TOWN

Cross Vt Trail continues to the west on Montpelier Siboinebi Path, leading directly to downtown Montpelier and tying into greater Barre-Montpelier area four communities paved bike path network ("Central Vt Path").

New portage trails built as a part of the Cross Vt Trail project will establish a key link in the **Winooski Paddlers Trail**, allowing safe paddling the length of Vermont's longest river.

Key:

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



Prepared by Cross Vermont Trail Association (CVTA), 9/2020
Data Source VCGI, CVTA. Information depicted for planning puposes only.



Build the Bridge Fact Sheet.

The fact is – You did it!

The biggest story here is that a truly grassroots citizen group is pulling off a major infrastructure improvement. This is made possible by VTrans and Federal Highway Administration believing in us and supporting the project development over many years. They provided several large federal grants that are paying for 80% of the cost of the bridge and some related expensive structures. But then the responsibility passed to CVTA to somehow pull together the engineering, permitting, landowner permissions and (this is the biggest part) the 20% of the cost that must come from local donors. We succeeded because hundreds of local individuals, businesses and municipalities all joined in to make construction of this bridge happen. Thank you to all!

The bridge is the keystone piece of a larger vision.

The larger vision is to connect the regional trail network (Montpelier Bike Path, Central Vt Regional Path through Berlin, Barre and Barre Town, and the East Montpelier Trail) up to U-32 School and on across East Montpelier to where the Montpelier and Wells River Rail Trail begins at Route 14 (where the Cross Vt Trail continues in various forms on to the New Hampshire border). At the same time the project is providing immediate access to the Winooski River for fishing, paddling and just walking through conserved land along the banks, as well as new trailheads, parking and other amenities, along with some single track Mountain Bike style loop trails.

Construction of all the trails that will eventually flow through the new Winooski Bridge is underway and will be completed incrementally over the course of the next three summers 2021 - 2023. You can help! There are many places where volunteer effort will be make a real difference and (full disclosure) we are still raising money for the full build out of the trails. But the Winooski Bridge is by far the most expensive and difficult single component of the whole effort, and we are more than excited to be doing the hardest part first!

This keystone project is part of CVTA's larger effort to have a complete, off road route from Montpelier to Groton. We are talking now with landowners about the best places to put new trail, and hope to have many new projects to tell you about in the coming few years.

Project Phases, Budget and ongoing Fundraising for full project between Gallison Hill Rd and Route 14.

Phase One: The Winooski Bridge itself.

The bridge is by far the biggest portion of the project cost. The money is raised and "in the bank" - amazing, thank you everyone! It is being built by CCS Constructors, work has begun Fall of 2020 with completion by CCS anticipated Spring 2021.

- *Federal Highway/VTrans Grant:* \$998,212
- *plus Local Raised Matching Funds:* \$249,554
- ***equals Total Cost of Phase One: \$1,247,766***
- *of which Still Need to Raise:* **No more for this phase, we did it!**

Phase Two: A short but expensive part along side Route 2 just east of the Winooski Bridge.

This short section spanning the Berlin, Barre Town and East Montpelier town lines requires relocating and replacing the existing highway guardrail and other work within the area of the highway. The direct involvement of work within the highway requires larger qualified contractors, making it the second biggest component of the total project cost.

We are preparing now to advertise for bids winter of 20/21 with construction summer 2021.

- *Federal Highway/VTrans Grant:* \$152,800
- *plus Local Raised Matching Funds:* \$38,200
- ***equals Total Cost of Phase Two: \$191,000***
- *of which Still Need to Raise:* **No more for this phase either, we did it!**

Phase Three: The Cross Vermont Trail between Gallison Hill Road and the Winooski Bridge.

The main trail through the forest behind U-32 School and beyond the big bridge up to near Route 2 will be built by CVTA with conservation corps crews and volunteers. This work will happen Summer and Fall 2021, the deadline for completion is November 2021.

- *Federal Highway/VTrans Grant:* \$111,145
- *plus needed Local Raised Matching Funds:* \$27,786
- ***equals Total Cost of Phase Three: \$138,931***
- *of which Still Need to Raise:* **We still need to raise the local match for this one = \$27,786.**

Phase Four: The remainder of the Cross Vt Trail from Winooski Bridge over towards Route 14, additional trail to U-32 School and along river, trailhead parking.

Finally, we will build the remainder of the Cross Vermont Trail, across Route 2 and up towards Route 14, as well as the spur trails to the school, various fishing, boating and river access trails, and two new trailheads with parking. This work will be lead by CVTA with conservation corps crews and smaller contractors. Work will be done incrementally over three years 2021 - 2023.

- *Federal Highway/VTrans Grant:* No federal highway grant money for this work.
- *plus Other funds to be raised by CVTA:* \$119,300
- ***equals Total Cost of Phase Four: \$119,300***
- *of which Still Need to Raise:* **We still need to raise these funds = \$119,300;** can be from any source and we are applying to grants and foundations as well as welcoming local donations. We are building incrementally and paying as we go - all donations will go straight to work on the trail.

Your donation builds more trail.

We invite you to be a **2021** contributing member of CVTA with a donation of any amount.

\$ _____ amount enclosed. *thank you!*

name _____

address _____

email _____

CROSS VERMONT TRAIL ASSOCIATION

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Secure online donation available at

www.crossvermont.org

