

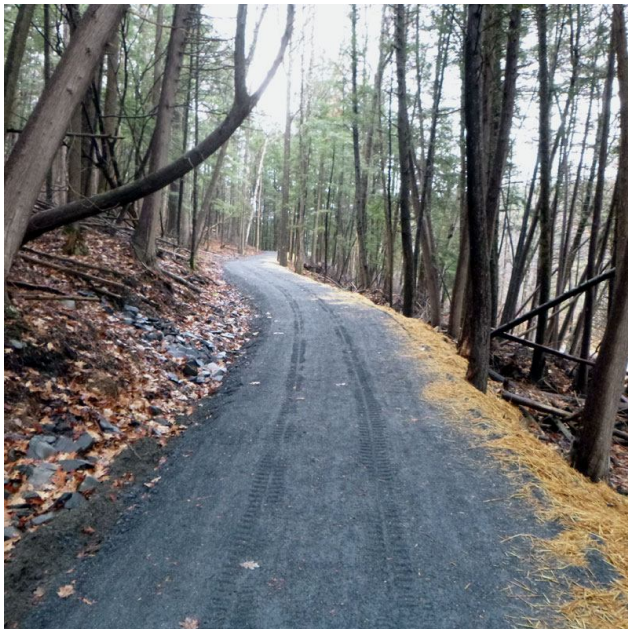
December 5, 2024

Winter greetings! We hope this letter finds you snug and warm. We are writing to ask you for an annual charitable contribution to the Cross Vermont Trail Association, a small non-profit with a big mission and a lot of heart!

Thank you for your past support of our work. **If you haven't donated recently, now is a great time as we prepare for major trail improvements in 2025.**

Flood Response Is Ongoing

2024 was another year of repairing flood damage. **The good news is that we had resources on hand from many generous past donors, so we were able to buy lumber and stone and rent equipment and move quickly to shore up threatened trail structures.** This quick work saved things from being even worse than they might have been. Truthfully though, long term repairs are still needed, with a backlog that is starting to add up state wide. We are resolved to get caught up to a good standard on all our trails next year, with your help.



The new Cross Vermont Trail segment in the U-32 School Forest was finished this year with a smooth coat of crushed stone. Connector side trails up to the school itself are mostly done, grand opening next June.



Shoring up a bridge on the rail trail about one mile east of Route 14, last August. Storm repairs like this ate up several months of CVTA staff time this year, and there is more to do next year.

New Trails Being Built

The original plan for 2024 was to make a big push to finish the trails on either side of the Winooski Bridge, especially the connection up to the U-32 School. Despite spending several months on storm response in the middle of the work season, **we were still able to put in a huge effort on the Winooski Bridge project**, and came very close to finishing this next segment. Seriously – look for a formal opening June 2025 of the U-32 Forest trails. And after that we will keep building the planned new trail eastward across East Montpelier up to the existing rail trail at Route 14, let's go!

The Big Picture

The Cross Vermont Trail is different from other long-distance trails because it celebrates local trails and works to connect them together. Our goal is convenient paths to desired destinations like schools, villages and quiet natural areas. **We take an active role in helping communities join trails into a regional network, with the Cross Vt Trail as the link among them.**

We believe strongly that trails which are inviting and accessible to people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds help improve the quality of life for everyone and add vitality to our towns and cities.

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.

Special thanks to CVTA Volunteers of the Year – the Town of Groton's ad hoc "upgrade the railbed" committee. Mike Nahmias (planning commission), Gary Lamberton (Buckaroos of 302 snowmobile club) and Mike Gaiss (recreation committee/not pictured).

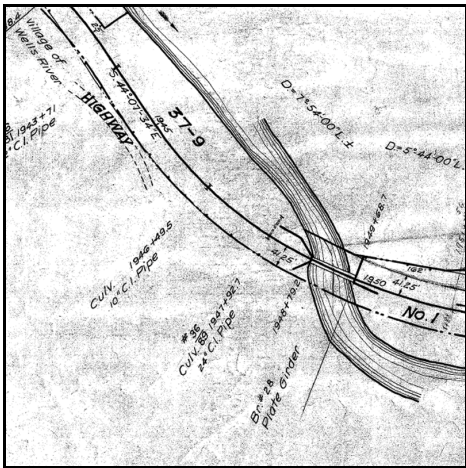


They put in many hours applying for and managing a large State grant to improve the rail trail in town; upgrades to be completed by June 2025.

At the same time CVTA is adding to the Town project with complimentary work paid for by your donations, moving over half a mile of the Cross Vermont Trail route off of roads and onto a path in the woods.

Talking with landowners in Ryegate, Newbury and more.

Last year we invested over \$20,000 of your donations paying surveyors and legal experts to untangle the history and ownership of the old "Montpelier & Wells River Railroad".



We mapped the original survey of the railbed, from back when trains were running, onto modern property lines.

This work allows us to proceed to serious conversations with current landowners about saving the old railbed where possible, and building a new trail similar to the old bed where needed, to ultimately reestablish a continuous off-road trail from Montpelier to Wells River.

Clear Signage and Neat Trailheads

In 2024 we continued to roll out the results of a multi-year push to provide new, informative signage along the Cross Vermont route and upgrade trailheads to be inviting and functional.

We're putting in the rearview mirror the old type of trailheads that were just wide spots in the road where people "who were in the know" knew to park. New trailheads are being built or significantly upgraded to be more formal with solid gravel areas for parking and large visible signs.

This winter we are working with a graphic designer to take a big step forward on a full suite of informative signs that will help people understand the trail route, kiosks with maps, and new blazes. Look for these to show up more next summer.

Every donation is NEEDED and goes straight to making better trails.

Donations to CVTA are critical to:

- keep existing trails in good shape, inviting and clear;
- build out the new trail segments that are now actively planned and ready to go;
- make deals with landowners to allow future projects that will continue to fill in the gaps and eventually create a complete state wide off-road trail.

We hope you can help us keep up the good work!

Gratefully,

Mike Thomas
CVTA Board Chair

Rose Paul
CVTA Board Secretary

Greg Western
CVTA Executive Director

P.S. **You can get involved.** CVTA is a true grassroots effort. A core group of active volunteers makes what we do possible. You can help! This is a chance to pitch in on important work where your personal effort makes a measurable difference.