

December 11, 2025

Greetings!

The Cross Vermont Trail Association is celebrating **a year of milestones achieved** and new goals coming into reach. Because of the contributions of many trail enthusiasts, we have made it through 2025 with great momentum even in the face of headwinds coming at us from the larger world.

2025 highlights:

- big step forward in the Winooski Bridge project and new trails linking with U-32 School
- total overhaul for the rail trail through Groton and Marshfield
- all new maps statewide, and many news signs especially from Montpelier to Wells River

Thank you for your past support of our work. ***If you haven't donated recently, now is a great time to give*** as we prepare to build miles of new trail in 2026.



"I hadn't ridden my bike in years. But when I heard about all the work being done on the trail I thought now is the time."

U-32 Trails are complete!

Winooski Bridge Project hits a major milestone (after two years of flood delay).

Two new trails are built and open in the gem like forest downhill from the U-32 School in East Montpelier.

Connections made. These trails link the school trails (and the wider East Montpelier Trails network) with the Cross Vermont Trail along the Winooski River (and the Montpelier Bike Path); integrating the school fully into the regional path network.

One of the trails — the "Western Connector" — is wide and gradual with a firm gravel surface. We've already seen school staff bike commuting to work on it.



*U-32 students run on the new trail this Fall.
(photo by Jeb Wallace-Brodeur; Times Argus)*

The other — the "Ridge Trail" — is a single track which highlights dramatic natural terrain overlooking the river. Each is over a half mile long.

The full suite of trails immediately on each side of the Winooski Bridge are now really done and open. Its a mix of accessible paths through the forest, preserved old railbed, and hiking trails forming loops. Next up we continue building east to join with the existing rail trail at Route 14!

*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.*

Generational upgrade to rail trail throughout Groton to Marshfield

The railbed is looking the best we've ever seen it.

We often say that the Cross Vermont Trail route is a "patchwork quilt" made of many pieces. And of these the crowning piece is clearly the 15 mile section mostly on the Montpelier & Wells River Rail Trail all the way through Groton and into Marshfield, including the heart of Groton State Forest.

In the past two years:

- Town of Marshfield rebuilt after floods better than before where the bed is a Class IV road.
- In Groton State Forest a long list of storm damage and deferred maintenance was all caught up on late in 2024.
- And most spectacularly the Town of Groton carried out a resurfacing and grading project this summer making the bed like new on the town owned section from Pine Mt. to the boundary of the State Forest at Rickers Mill.

Cross Vermont Trail Association supported all this work and is committed to help maintain the bed so it continues in good shape. Furthermore this summer **we were able to add to the larger project by:**

- establishing over a half mile of new off road trail on town owned land in Groton, greatly reducing a couple of long gaps in the old railbed
- donating two more gates to help manage use of the railbed, and building thirteen "gate go-arounds" to allow people to easily bike around the existing gates along the bed
- designing and installing a comprehensive set of new signs along this whole stretch



"Hey guys, just wanted to report that I finally got out on the Groton bike trail this week. The gate work is fantastic. Totally accessible to someone riding a trike. The surface is good. The grading was really nice. You did just a beautiful job and I am so grateful and I am sure that others will also be grateful. Thanks again. I'm so happy to be able to use the bike trail again."

- letter to CVTA this Fall

Extensive new trail maps and signs

We had to do it. As new landowner permissions are being granted and new sections of trail are built and opened our beloved 2010 maps were thankfully becoming out of date. In 2025 we revised the full statewide set of maps. Our goal now is to make these obsolete too, as quick as we can.



Check out all the new maps at crossvermont.org

We also greatly expanded our mapping of trails in Groton State Forest through which the Cross Vermont Trail is the central line. Our comprehensive map now shows all the trails in the State Forest and how they link from the railbed to campgrounds, mountain summits and wilderness ponds.

Finally, we have highlighted the railroad history from Montpelier to Wells River with signs all along the remnants of the old railbed and with a photo rich write up on our website.



A variety of new trailhead and place-making signs.



A series of info kiosks, large and small.



Many new route markers and guide signs.

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.

Next Up in 2026

Final push to finish the Winooski Bridge project all the way across East Montpelier to Route 14. From the "Hidden Dam" trailhead on Route 2 upstream for about a mile, and then uphill across farm and forest land for another mile to where the rail trail begins. Building this trail will be among the hardest things we've ever tried to do. It's a narrow corridor to squeeze the construction through. But we're gearing up to get it done, come what may.

Working with landowners to preserve new sections of trail. These quiet conversations are ongoing and lay the groundwork for future trail easements. We hope to be able to announce important new agreements in the coming year. We are also talking with towns to help plan for and manage recreational access to the numerous FEMA buyout properties along the Winooski River which are gradually coming into public ownership.

Sustainability for the Future. In 2026 the CVTA Board will be working to update our five-year Strategic Plan and prepare for a Sustainability Campaign. With an increasing portfolio of trails under management comes more obligations for maintenance and coordination. The board is looking ahead and planning towards a strong foundation for our organization—stay tuned!

Every donation is NEEDED and goes straight to making better trails. 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 inviting prospective new Board Members to take a test run. Sit in with our team for a project or two, and see if its something you want to do more. **Projects include planning fun outings, pitching in on maintenance and improvements, exploring for possible new trail locations, and of course helping with administration and oversight of a small but bustling non profit** organization. We have several open slots, and are looking for new folks from across the state.

P.P.S. Kick off 2026 in fresh air. Join us January 3 at 1 PM at the Plainfield Park & Ride trailhead. We'll take a short walk or ski on the rail trail, listen for winter birds and enjoy hot cocoa. Come one come all. Suitable for families (snow suits that is). More outings are being planned for later in the year, sign up for our email newsletter or check out crossvermont.org to keep up to date on the schedule.



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

Your donation builds more trail.

We invite you to be a 2026 contributing member of CVTA with a donation of any amount.

\$_____ amount enclosed. *Thank You!*

name: _____

address: _____

email: _____

One of our new trailhead information maps. This one is off of Gallison Hill Road in Montpelier.
At the beginning of the new suite of trails that have been completed and opened on either side of the Winooski Bridge, including connections up to the U-32 School.

