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14
local areas

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14 bike parks

Across Rutland and Windsor County

Rutland County

Windsor County

Moosalamoo National Recreation Area
Various locations, Goshen, Salisbury

Rochester Valley Trails
99 Ranger Road, Rochester

Hawk Hill Trails
2997 Franklin St, Brandon

Green Mountain Trails
4276 Route 100, Pittsfield

Pittsford Trails
223 Recreation Area Rd, Pittsford

Sherburne Trails
Route 100 & 4 Killington

Pine Hill Park
2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland

Aqueduct Trails
Off Cox District Road, Woodstock

Killington Bike Park
3861 Killington Rd, Killington

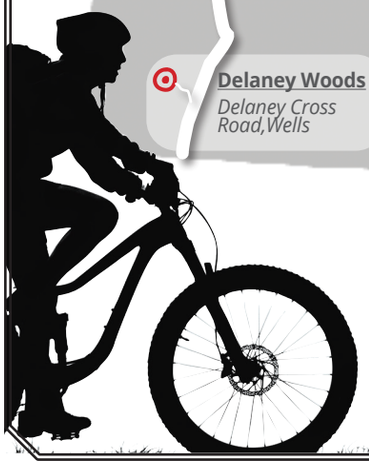
Mt. Peg
Mt. Peg Road, Rte 106, Woodstock

Fairground Trails
125 Town Farm Road, Poultney

Evolution Bike Park
77 Okemo Ridge Road, Ludlow

Endless Brook
975 Endless Brook Road, Poultney

Delaney Woods
Delaney Cross Road,Wells



MEDICAL CENTERS

Rutland Regional Medical Center
160 Allen St, Rutland

Community Health & Urgent Care, Rutland
215 Stratton Road, Rutland

Clear Choice MD Urgent Care
713 S. Main St, Rutland

Express Care Castleton
275 VT-30, Bomoseen

Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center
32 Pleasant St, Woodstock

In an emergency, DIAL 911

Get a GRIP

Hold on, don't lose traction — get a GRIP! This mountain bike (mtb) trail guide will help you find new opportunities to ride throughout central Vermont — and enhance your experience while you're in the area with tips on where to go, what to do — and sometimes even what to eat!

This guide provides up-to-date trail maps for 14 mountain bike networks in 12 local towns: In Killington there's the Resort bike park and the Sherburne Trails (which includes Base Camp and Gifford Woods); In Rutland, there's Pine Hill Park; in Poultney and Wells, Delaney Woods, Endless Brook and Fairgrounds; in Woodstock, Aqueduct and Mt. Peg trails; in Pittsfield, the Green Mountain Trails; in Rochester, the Rochester Valley Trails; in Goshen and Salisbury, the Moosalamoo trails; in Pittsford, the Town Trails; in Brandon, the Hawk Hill trails; and in Ludlow, Evolution at Okemo. Together there are over 250 trails all within about a 30-minute drive from each other, making the area a terrific destination for riding.

This guide has been published as a result of local businesses supporting mountain biking.

Sincerely,

Polly Ly-Mikula

MOUNTAIN TIMES

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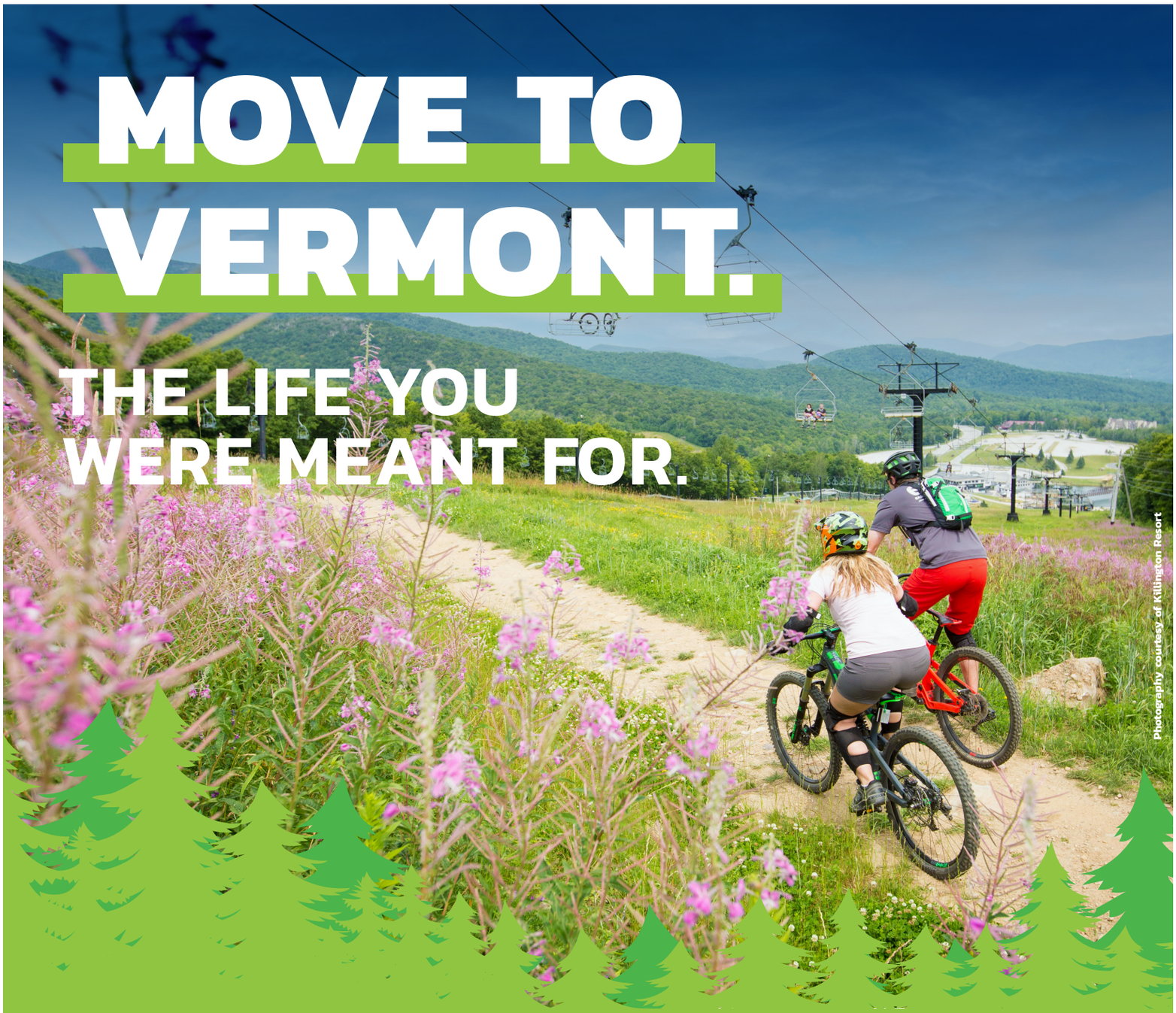

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RU VT Real Rutland

Mountain biking grows statewide

Popularity, ridership, trail use and memberships documented at bike parks

By Polly Mikula

Mountain biking in Vermont is now the state's fastest-growing form of outdoor recreation, according to the Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA) a nonprofit that provides advocacy, education, and community-driven stewardship statewide and to local chapters. In 2022 alone, TrailForks counted over 580,000 ride logs, more than double their pre-pandemic number. (The true number of rides or riders in Vermont is unknown as there are no fees or trail counters on most trail systems, but there is data from those who log their rides. Those that do require tickets, like Killington Resort, have also documented exponential growth over the past few years reaching over 50,000 riders last season.)

"The growth of the sport has been exponential in the past — call it five years," Mark Harris, a Woodstock Area Mountain Bike Association board member told VTDigger in June. "It's really hard for us to quantify what's happening, but you can feel it."

Doubling ridership in a few short years was not expected or planned for, but VMBA and its local chapters have responded to the new interest with vigor. And the state has pitched in with more funding for new and improved trails, signage and strategic planning.

VMBA has also grown, wrapping up last year with nearly 10,000 members — equivalent to 1.5% of Vermont's population — across 29 local chapters who steward 900+ miles of public-access singletrack.

With increased growth, however, comes increased impact and those at the helm of VMBA acknowledged the need for a long-term plan to support this growth and ensure sustainable trail riding.

"Taking stock of the state of the big challenges and opportunities for mountain biking here in Vermont, as well as the strengths VMBA has developed as an organization, allowed us to put together a plan that we believe will bring trail riding in Vermont to the next level," said Nick Bennette, VMBA executive director.

VMBA released its 5-year strategic plan in January 2023. In it the organization outlined seven major goals:

1. Steward a statewide network of accessible, well-planned, progressive, and sustainable trails.
2. Move public-access recreational trails out of Act 250 and into an appropriate oversight model.
3. Acknowledge landowners by incorporating public-access trails into the Current Use program.
4. Establish an informed ridership that knows where, when and how to ride.
5. Count the majority of those who regularly use our trails as active VMBA members.
6. Significantly increase youth, non-male, BIPOC, and adaptive representation in MTB ridership.
7. Run a thriving, sustainable organization that attracts and retains talent and develops our chapters.

The VMBA is also addressing those concerned that the growth is leading to overcrowding.

The majority of trail networks in the area were not designed for the volume of riders today, so VMBA and others are working on the expansion of parking and trail networks particularly in those experiencing the greatest strains.

In a recent study called "Vermont Electric-Assist Mountain Bike (eMTB) Attitudes and Knowledge Research Report" produced by the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont for People For Bikes, respondents shared their perspective of crowding due to rapid growth in popularity. The also weighed in on whether or not growth of the sport was inherently positive or negative.

Many participants shared the opinion that more people in the sport should be viewed positively, as long as there is the infrastructure to support it, the report summarized, quoting one participant who said he understood "the fear of more users."

"Coming up in the mountain biking sport for so many years, I understand what they're saying. I get it. I share that lens. I have for a long time," the UVM study quoted him saying. "However, with that said, why is it a bad thing? More people are getting out and going this sport that they love, right? What there should be is more advocacy. There should be more funding. We should be better at educating and sharing and building trails. Over the last several years, I've actually just changed my perception on this whole thing."

The study also concluded that "increased ridership is not only in line with the value of inclusivity in the sport, but may increase the number of individuals engaged in trail work, education, and advocacy around the sport. The increase in users was specifically mentioned as one important solution to addressing new trail infrastructure development with more new volunteers able to be engaged for these activities."

Presidents of local mountain bike club chapters echo this same hope, calling for riders to pitch in and volunteer or contribute where they can, whether that be helping to build or improve a trail on community work days, donating money or simply following good trail etiquette including the environmental principal 'leave no trace.'

"The model we're really trying to establish is community-supported stewardship," said Nick Bennette, VMBA executive director.

A good place to start is to become a member of VMBA and/or a local chapter and stay connected to future opportunities. For more information visit: vmba.org.

Okemo Resort

Top local mountain bike events

Maxxis Eastern States Cup: Oakley Showdown, Killington

June 24-25

This Gravity Mountain Bike Racing Series is in its 14th season and features 20 races at a dozen venues spread across the Northeast. The series is recognized for its professionalism, high level of competition, and emphasis on fun. This Killington event feature Downhill and Enduro racing for all age groups.

EasternStatesCup.com.

The Prouty, Hanover, N.H.

July 15

Ride 20, 35, 50, 77 or 100 miles on roads in the Upper Valley or choose a 70K or 100K gravel ride! The 42nd annual Prouty is northern New England's largest family-friendly fundraising event combining cycling, walking, rowing, golf and more to raise funds and awareness for life-saving research and critical patient and family support services at Dartmouth Cancer Center.

Tinyurl.com/ProutyNH

Slate Valley Epic, Poultney

July 15-16

The Slate Valley Epic is a 40+ mile, over 5,000 feet vertical mountain bike race on Vermont's newest and best single & double-track trails in the Slate Valley of southwestern Vermont in Poultney. Third annual event will take place Saturday and Sunday at the Fairgrounds Trailhead. The expo is open to the public so come watch, cheer, eat, demo bikes and celebrate with SVT and the racers Saturday and Sunday. Both days will have vendors, bike demos, camping on site, music and food.

Slatevalleytrails.org/slate-valley-epic

Maxxis Eastern States Cup, Sugarbush

July 22-23

Gravity Mountain Bike Racing Series. Races include Downhill Enduro and Kask showdown. Compete in Downhill, Enduro and Kask showdown.

EasternStatesCup.com

Flow State MTB Festival, Ascutney

July 28-30

Celebrate all things mountain biking at the third annual Flow State Mountain Bike Festival located at Ascutney Outdoor Center in Brownsville, Vt. The network boasts 45-miles of singletrack, with access to an additional 10 miles of trail on private property. FLOW STATE features demos, guided rides and clinics as well as camping, food trucks, beer and live music.

FlowStatemtbFestival.com

Tour De Slate, Middletown Springs

Aug. 5

The Tour de Slate is made up of five different routes designed to provide an enjoyable ride no matter what your level of experience. For avid road cyclists there is the metric century (100km, 63.4 mi) ride. Other choices include: a 36 mile route, a 25 mile route or a family ride (off road on a trail). There is a ride suitable for everyone. Proceeds benefit Teen Challenge, VT.

Tourdeslate.org

Killington Resort

Slab City Trail Challenge, Randolph

Aug. 12

This is the second annual fundraising event for the Ridgeline Outdoor Collective's Youth Program. The course will take you across virtually all of the Randolph area trail network. The roughly 20 mile adventure will start and finish at The Gear House and link up classic single track, local favorites, flow trail and some spicy new downhills. Choose your own adventure, or ride the full course!

Bikereg.copm/slab-coty-trail-tour

The Vermont Overland, Reading/West Windsor

Aug. 26

The Overland is a 55-mile dirt road bicycle race featuring 7,000 feet of climbing, seven sectors of "Vermont pavé" (unmaintained ancient public roads), two well-fortified sag stops, a magnificently scenic route and an awesome party afterwards. It's the ultimate overland adventure ride. Open dirt roads, amazing scenery and an epic course through a Vermont pastoral setting. Park at Ascutney Outdoors.

Vermontoverland.com/overland

Kelly Brush Ride, Middlebury

Sept. 9

Participants can ride 100, 50, 20, or 10 mile routes through the scenic Champlain Valley.The 18th annual ride benefits the Kelly Brush Foundation and helps people with spinal cord injuries resume active lives.

Kellybrushfoundation.org

Vermont 50 Mountain Bike or Ultra Run, West Windsor

Sept. 24

The Vermont 50 is an annual race held during the last weekend of September at Mount Ascutney located in West Windsor. Mtb races include: Vermont 50 mile Mountain Bike Race, Womens 2-person Bike Relay, Over 60 2-person Bike Relay, and a Kids Fun Bike Ride. This family-friendly event offersg lots of kid centered activities such as the Hay Bale Treasure Hunt, The Fun Run, clowns, face painting and more!Proceeds go to Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports.

Vermont50.com

Fox US Open of Mountain Biking, Killington

Sept. 21-24

The Fox US Open of Mountain Biking returns to Killington following the event's electrifying return to the east coast in 2022. Professional and amateur athletes from around the world will compete in the Open Class Downhill for one of the largest cash purses in racing. The event also offers amateur racing classes in Downhill, Enduro and Dual Slalom. Spectating is free, and approved areas of the bike park open to the public during the event. Also, back by popular demand will be the USO Best Whip, taking place on a massive set of jumps carved into the base area of the bike park for easy viewing.

Killington.com

Maxxis Eastern States Cup: Downhill Finals, Killington

Oct. 15

Killington is happy to host the final stop of the MAXXIS Eastern States Cup Intense Downhill MTB Series Championship! The top 5 Men's/Women's Pro finishers will split a pot of over $1,000. Top 5 in every class reach the podium, and top 3 in every class receive custom MAXXIS Eastern States Cup medals. Series points won at this event will count with a 50% bonus!

Killington.com

Ranch Camp

Traveling north to ride? Head to Ranch Camp in Stowe to find out about local trails, clinics, group rides, bike equipment or just to have some food or drinks and reflect on your ride.

Weekly events

KMBC Bike Bum race series, Killington

Wednesday nights from 2-5 p.m. on Lower Rabbit Hole at Killington Resort June 21-Aug. 23. Run by the Killington Mountain Bike Club. After party from 5-7 p.m. at various Killington restaurants. Individuals may enter a single race for $20. Day-of registration will take place at the start gate. Killington resort lift pass required.

KillingtonMountainBikeClub.org/bike-bum

WAMBA weekly group ride, Woodstock

Thursday night 5:45-6:45 p.m. through October. Locations alternate between Mt. Peg (Knox Meadow parking lot) and the Aqueduct trails(Cox District Road parking).

MTBwoodstock.com

Slate Valley Women's Group Ride, Poultney

Tuesday night 5:30-7:30 p.m. through August. All are welcome. Meet at the Fairgrounds Trailhead 15 minutes early. Rides vary 6-10 miles.

Slatevalleytrails.org

Slate Valley Group Ride, Poultney

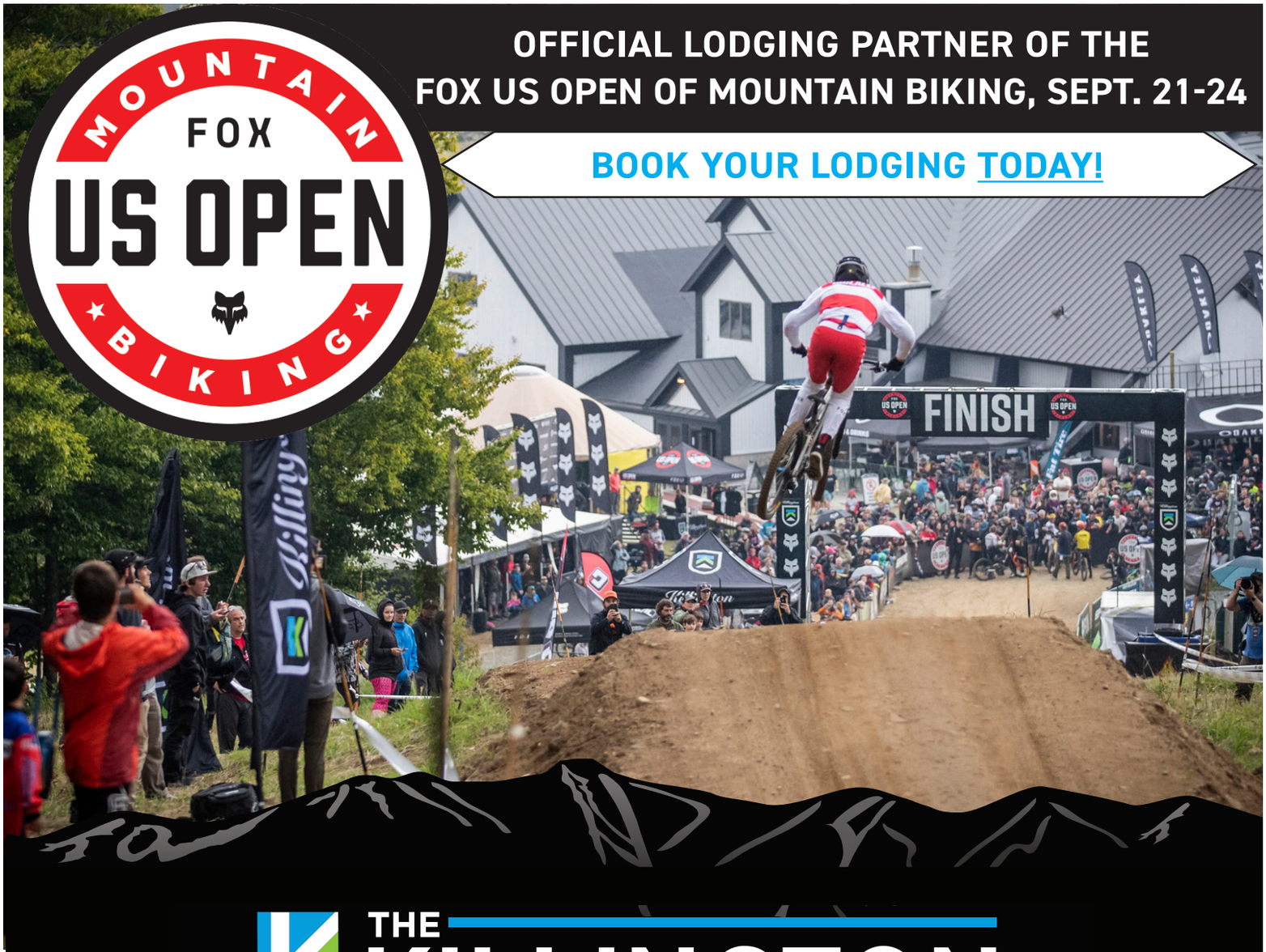
Wednesday night 5:30-7:30 p.m. through September. All are welcome. Meet at the Fairgrounds Trailhead 15 minutes early. Rides vary 8-10+ mile rides.

Slatevalleytrails.org

Ridgeline Outdoor Collective Advanced Ride

Tuesday night 6-8 p.m through Oct. 3. Meet at the Gear House, 16 Pleasant Street in Randolph.

RidgelineOutdoorCollective.org



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FOX U.S. Open of Mountain Biking returns to Killington, Sept. 21-24

The Fox U.S. Open of Mountain Biking race festival will take place Sept. 21-24 at Killington Resort, following the event's electrifying return to the East Coast last year.

Professional and amateur athletes from around the world are anticipated to compete in the Open Class Downhill for one of the largest cash purses in racing. The Fox U.S. Open also offers amateur racing classes in Downhill, Enduro and Dual Slalom.

"We're looking forward to hosting the 20th anniversary of the U.S. Open at Killington in 2023. The venue proved once again to be a great home for the USO and we are excited to continue to build on the momentum generated last year," stated Clay Harper, co-founder and event director of the Fox U.S. Open. "The Vermont mountain bike community is unlike any other," Harper continued. "We want everyone to come ride bikes, watch some incredible racing and help u celebrate our 20th anniversary!"

Nina Hoffmann, who won the Women's Downhill event last year, is also excited for the event to be back at Killington this summer. "2022 was my first time attending the U.S. Open and it was a super cool event!" she said. "I really liked Killington and it was fun being there with the Syndicate crew and everyone from Fox. It was just a good atmosphere and of course to get the win — for me was a great way to finish off the season. Happy to hear it is coming back in 2023 and I'm looking forward to defending my win!"

The Fox U.S. Open of Mountain Biking has long created opportunities for young athletes to strive toward, with a history of racers like Richie Rude and Neko Mulally, who competed as kids in the Downhill back in the mid 2000s. In 2022, the Fox U.S. Open collaborated with USA Cycling to introduce new Cat 1 age categories for athletes under 15 years old. The biggest moves, however, came from young athletes Asa Vermette, 15, and Aletha Ostgaard, 14 – both earning top five finishes in the Open Class Downhill.

"The atmosphere at U.S. Open is great!" said Asa Vermette. "The Dual Slalom and the Best Whip were sick! The DH track was insane, from chunky with roots to manicured jumps — every lap I did was so fun! Getting on the podium was crazy with all the fast guys there. I was stoked to get 3rd and I am hyped to go back for 2023!"

The U.S. Open Downhill race will remain true to its heritage as an open class event that gives up-and-coming racers the chance to compete against the pros and will again be included in the U.S. Downhill National Series. Racers age 14 and under will also have their shot in the Next Gen Youth Downhill event, which offers categories for intermediate and expert racers.

Also back by popular demand will be the USO Best Whip, taking place on a massive set of jumps carved into the base area of the bike park for a premier viewing experience. This invitational competition is a crowd favorite and must-see.

Beyond the competition, the Fox U.S. Open attracts race fans, freeriders and families with Killington Bike Park remaining open to the public throughout the entire event week.

For more event information, visit: USopen.bike.

By P- C. Vanderyajt and PJ Rice

Nina Hoffmann (No. 2 racing in white) won the Women's Downhill last year in Killington. (Above) crowds cheer on the racer and Best Whip contestants.

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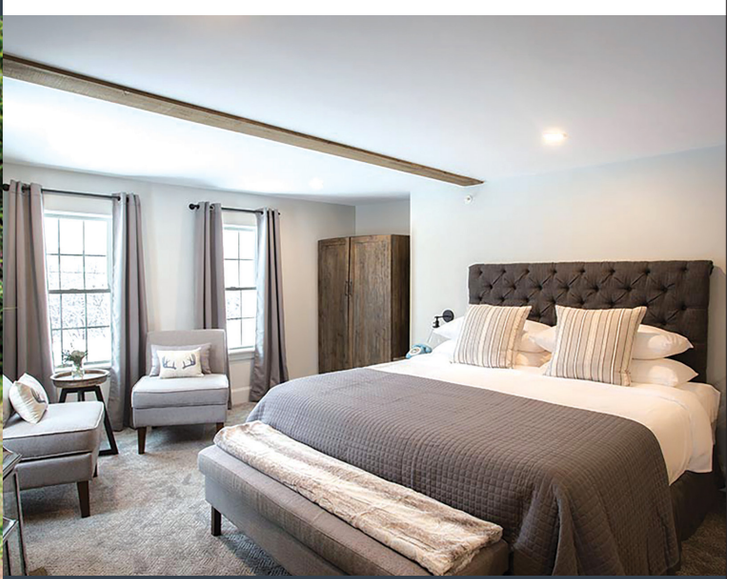


RIDE FROM YOUR ROOM

Velomont buildout continues, official opening planned for 2024

By Brett Yates

The Velomont Trail, Vermont's top-to-bottom mountain biking route, will have its official opening in 2024, according to Angus McCusker, the project's executive director.

But riders don't have to wait till then — or until the 485-mile trail's actual completion date, projected for sometime around 2030 — to get a sample. After a winter's hiatus, work resumed this spring on a pair of half-finished segments that, if all goes to plan, will add a total of more than 7 miles of singletrack early this season in the Green Mountain National Forest.

The 2.3-mile Swan Dive will link Bingo Brook Road in Rochester to Swan Mills, a three-mile doubletrack leading into the Rochester Valley Trails network. And in Chittenden, a 5-mile trail called Perspiration will cross between the Chittenden Brook Hut, a 10-bed camping destination, and Morrill Brook.

"Obviously, once a trail segment is completed, there's no need to say you can't ride it or use it," McCusker noted.

Each expansion offers a suggestion of the broader intentions of the project.

With the help of new overnight accommodations for its users, the Velomont Trail aims to create an off-road passage for mountain bikers from Massachusetts to the Canadian border, as the Long Trail does for hikers and the Catamount Trail does for cross-country skiers. Along the way, it will connect many of the small and large networks of singletrack that already dot the state, like the Slate Valley Trails in Poultney and the Green Mountain Trails in Pittsfield.

Two more segments of the Velomont Trail, running parallel to Forest Road 45 for roughly 2 miles and separated by a gap of only about 100 yards of on-road riding, will enter construction this summer. Named Ferns & Turns and Chitty Bang Bang, they will offer southbound access to the same Chittenden Brook Hut that northbound riders will approach via Perspiration.

"Chitty Bang Bang will be built to adaptive trail standards," McCusker highlighted. "Most of these trails will be suitable for adaptive riding, but this one will be designed and built specifically for adaptive riding, which is cool because it'll be right from the Chittenden Brook Campground, and the campground has the ADA-compliant Chittenden Brook Hut."

"We're working with Vermont Adaptive on hut accessibility," he continued. "And some of the huts will, we're hoping, have a wheelchair provided, so that if you're riding on your adaptive bike and get to a hut, you have a chair to get around."

With the Velomont Trail's isolated sections beginning to tie together, McCusker expects to use part of a $141,488 master planning grant, awarded by the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative in 2022, to design signage and other wayfinding materials that will facilitate long-distance rides. With the addition of this signage next spring, the Velomont Trail Collective will host its grand opening.

Riders in Central Vermont will get the first taste of the Velomont Trail as a coherent, marked route offering multi-day journeys. By the end of 2023, the United States Forest Service will likely issue a verdict on a 32-mile proposal that would bring Velomont riders from Chittenden to Mendon by way of federal land.

This portion of the Velomont Trail, which would include a 3.4-mile spur linking it to Killington's Shelburne Trails network, is one component of the Forest Service's Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project, a controversial forest management plan currently under review in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Forest Service has received hundreds of negative comments from locals and activists who oppose the possibility of new logging in the Telephone Gap area, which occupies much of Rutland County's northeastern corner.

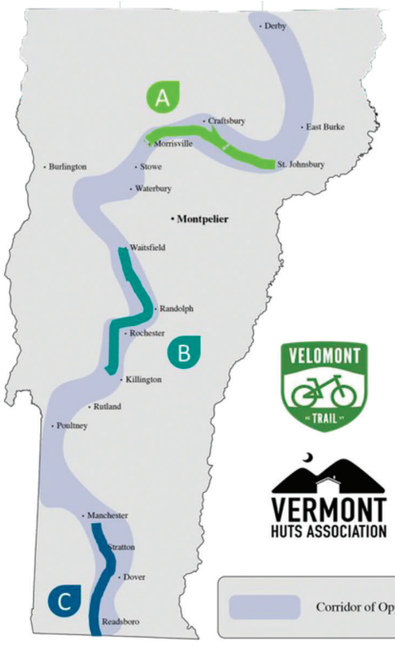
> "Obviously, once a trail segment is completed, there's no need to say you can't ride it or use it," McCusker noted.

McCusker stressed the independence of the Velomont Trail Collective's request for new recreational infrastructure from the question of the 12,000-acre timber harvest simultaneously contemplated by the Forest Service. One doesn't depend upon the other.

"The timber management has nothing to do with what the trail proposal was," McCusker emphasized. "The decision made could include or exclude certain things."

Continued on page 19 →

A **unique workforce development program** will construct **30 new huts** and connect an expansive **485-mile trail network** of new and existing mountain biking trails across Vermont to create a continuous trail from Massachusetts to Canada across National Forest, State, and private lands, **conserving up to 214,000 acres** of land for generations through sustainable recreation.



VELOMONT TRAIL

VERMONT HUTS ASSOCIATION

A
Total Huts: 3
(3 new, 0 existing)
Total Trail: 41 miles
(0 new, 0 improved, 41 existing)

B
Total Huts: 7
(6 new, 1 existing)
Total Trail: 113 miles
(82 new, 3 improved, 28 existing)

C
Total Huts: 3
(3 new, 0 existing)
Total Trail: 50 miles
(18 new, 44 improved, 15 existing)

Continued from page 18

Before then, it seems, federal officials will have another potential Velomont route to consider in the Green Mountain National Forest's Manchester District. There, McCusker hopes to get permission to use roughly 30 existing miles of the Catamount Trail for mountain biking during skiing's off-season.

"It'll be going through NEPA sometime soon," he said. "We haven't officially submitted it yet."

Warm-weather use of the Catamount Trail could require minor modifications at stream crossings and other wet, low points, along with some rerouting. McCusker argued that this would make for a more resilient skiing route as well.

"That's a great way to adapt to a changing climate for them: to have a trail tread that's more sustainable. With less water on the trail tread, less snowmelt, it's good — it can hold snow better, and you can use it with less snow," he said.

A bikeable Catamount Trail in the Manchester District would give Velomont riders access to the latest hut developed by the Vermont Huts Association (VHA). The Grout Pond Hut, which can accommodate up to 10 guests, opened in January in Stratton.

VHA aims, ultimately, to build 30 to 45 huts and hostels along the Velomont Trail corridor, which would give riders a stopping point every 10 to 15 miles, whether in the remote backcountry or in the middle of a town. Nine months after securing a $2.5 million earmark for trail construction, Sen. Patrick Leahy negotiated $3.8 million in congressionally directed spending in December to help build these lodgings.

VHA Executive Director RJ Thompson mentioned tentative plans for a hostel in Randolph and huts in Waitsfield and Waterbury. The first of these huts would involve a partnership with a private landowner, the other with the state of Vermont.

"The timing of any of these is hard to really nail down, just given all the kind of moving components," Thompson said.

In Rochester, local entrepreneurs have already made a contribution of their own to the Velomont Trail's future network of accommodations. Anni Mackay and Doon Hinderyckx, the couple that owns Green Mountain Bikes, have redeveloped an abandoned office building three doors down, at 147 North Main St., as the 14-room Stable Inn, which welcomed its first guests in April.

These inaugural guests happened to be a trio trail builders from Titus Trails. The Idaho-based firm joined local builders L&D Trailworks and Apex Trailworks among the Velomont Trail Collective's contractors this year.

According to Hinderyckx, the concept for the Stable Inn didn't arise specifically as a result of the plans for the Velomont Trail, but he called the latter "an encouragement." He and Mackay expect to coordinate with VHA to make reservations available on its website.

"We're one of their stars on the map because it's not just a hut but a place where you can get a shower and re-provision and get ready to head out into the simpler accommodations and huts," Hinderyckx commented.

Some of VHA's own future hostels would also serve users of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, with which Velomont Trail thru-bikers will link up for 51 miles between Morrisville and St. Johnsbury. This March, the Vermont Agency of Transportation announced the completion of the final segment of the multi-use gravel path — with the exception of the Fisher Bridge in Wolcott, expected to open by Memorial Day.

The town of Wolcott anticipates giving Velomont riders a reason to stop along the way, thanks to its recent vote to acquire 307 forested acres that will become the Wolcott Community Forest. The Trust for Public Lands (TPL), a nationwide nonprofit that works to bring open space under municipal, state, and federal ownership, has begun working with the town to develop mountain biking trails on the site.

"Right from the beginning, we knew it could be benefitted by the Velomont Trail and it could benefit the Velomont Trail," TPL Senior Project Manager Kate Wanner said of the municipal forest.

Alongside a variety of other partners, TPL will play a role in developing a master plan for the Velomont Trail "over the next year or year and a half," said Wanner, who had recently attended the steering committee's first meeting.

While much of the Velomont Trail will make use of publicly owned land, connections between such segments will necessarily pass through what is now private property, and here TPL's expertise in negotiation and conservation will come in handy.

"Sometimes we'll be working on a project where it makes sense for the Velomont to consider routing through there, or they will come to us with some priorities and we will start the process of trying to acquire those lands because it's in an essential pinch point," Wanner explained.

This spring, TPL completed the long-awaited transfer of Ralston Rest — whose 2,744 acres in Chittenden, Killington, and Mendon, previously unprotected, constituted the largest inholding in the Green Mountain National Forest for many years — to the Forest Service.

"It was just kind of years and years of paperwork and solving small problems," Wanner related.

At Chittenden's South Pond, Ralston Rest once hosted an off-grid cabin, destroyed by arson in 2018. Pending the Forest Service's approval, VHA will start rebuilding it next year to serve Long Trail hikers, skiers on a rerouted Catamount Trail, and mountain bikers on the Velomont Trail.

Vermont Hut Association

The Chittenden Brook hut is open for year-round use and is located on a semi-remote campground in Green Mountain National Forest off Forest Road 45. It sleeps 10.

Submitted

Ben Hannibal of Washington, D.C. mountain bikes at Killington Resort with assistance from Vermont Adaptive.

Vt seeks to become 'haven' for adaptive athletes

Trail accessibility is under review with plans for expansion

By Katy Savage

Efforts are underway to make mountain biking accessible for all in Vermont.

This year, Vermont Adaptive has begun offering grants, with help from seed funding from the Kelly Brush Foundation in Burlington, to help expand trail width and make them accessible for adaptive bikes.

"Vermont is accessible, Vermont is for everybody and there are more places to play," said Jeff Alexander, the director of strategic partnerships and business development at Vermont Adaptive. "Everybody deserves to play and have the ability to get out."

Part of the effort aligns with the state initiative to increase tourism with diversity and inclusion combined with the explosion of mountain bike trails in the state.

"Folks in this state are passionate about the trails and they don't want to make them easy," Alexander said. "That's the misconception. You're not making a trail easy, you're just making it accessible."

So far, eight assessments have been conducted at Slate Valley Trails, Pine Hill Park, Killington Mountain Bike Club, Rochester Outdoor Collective, Kingdom Trails, Brewster River Mountain Bike Club, Fellowship of the Wheel and Mad River Riders.

More assessments are slated to begin this summer and fall at the Ridgeline Outdoor Collective, Southern Vermont Trails Association, Brewster River Mountain Bike Club, Fellowship of the Wheel - Battell Woods, Saskadena Six and Mt. Peg.

"We found certain trails that people thought were not accessible, might actually be accessible after all. And found trails that people thought were accessible are not so we're working with Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA) to review the trails and features of trails to make sure," said Vermont Adaptive Director of Communications and Marketing Kim Jackson.

It's a process where the VMBA chapters throughout the state fill out a questionnaire on what trails they want to assess, then VMBA works with Vermont Adaptive and the Kelly Brush Foundation to ride the trails with local leaders and trail builders. Some trails need to be widened, some have bridges, some have berms that are too steep.

The goal is to update the VMBA website with marked trails for adaptive riders.

"Working closely with Vermont Adaptive, we hope to establish Vermont as a haven for adaptive athletes and create a statewide network of places for everyBODY to play and connect with nature," Kelly Brush Foundation said in a press release.

For adaptive riders, trail width and turning radius are most important. Trails need to be at least three feet wide for accessible bikes. Sometimes trails aren't accessible because of parking or problems

Submitted

Hannibal comes to Killington about once a year on a mountain bike trip and he participates in the annual Vermont Adaptive Charity Challenge in June. The challenge is open to mountain bike riders and hikers to raise money for Vermont Adaptive's grant programs and events. They loop trails and roads through Killington, Pittsfield, Bethel, Barnard, Woodstock, Ludlow, Bridgewater, and Plymouth .

getting to the trails themselves.

"I think it's needed, I don't think most people know that adaptive biking is a thing," said Ben Hannibal, an adaptive rider. "I think people would realize how many things we can do."

Hannibal, who lives in Washington, D.C., heard about adaptive mountain bike opportunities in Vermont through an Instagram post in 2021.

"I saw a guy I follow who was doing it and so I was like, 'I want to do it'," he said.

Hannibal grew up in Maryland and spent most of his days outside before failed spinal surgery in 2006 left him partially paralyzed. He now works for the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. and he comes to Killington once a year to mountain bike.

"To have a chance to mountain bike again is rewarding," he said. "I like being out in the woods, you have that peace, you're climbing these hills, you're being outside."

For Greg Durso, a paraplegic and program director at the Kelly Brush Foundation, being outside is just as important now as it was before a sledding accident in Ludlow left him partially paralyzed.

"To me being active is so important and part of my identity, but even more important, being in a wheelchair, it helps you thrive post-injury, introduces you to a new community of people, gets you out of the house, helps in getting back to work," said Durso on the KBF website. "It has so many facets that help you physically, socially and mentally and sets you up for success. It also translates to everyone else in life too, so you can connect with others on so many different levels."

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RIDE: Killington

Killington Resort

Killington Bike Park (resort)

Killington Resort's bike park is over 30 years old, but in the past decade significant investments in the park (particularly beginner and intermediate terrain) have improved and expanded it significantly! Now it's New England's fastest growing downhill mountain bike park, according to the resort. There are three high-speed lifts serving over 30 miles of trails — beginner to expert. The Snowshed area offers beginner terrain with features to challenge intermediate riders, too. The Ramshead area offers intermediate and advanced terrain for bikers who've graduated from Snowshed. (Tip: start with Blue Magic). The Killington Peak area is for advanced riders featuring classic New England singletrack with plenty of rock and roots. The bike park also offers a skills park, kids' strider park and a designated uphill route. The resort in partnership with Killington Mountain School, offers summer mountain bike camps for riders 7-17 years old. All riders must purchase a pass to access the trails. For more information visit Killington.com.

Sherburne Trails

This trail network now connects three areas: The Sherburne Trails, Gifford Woods and Base Camp trails — all maintained by the Killington Mountain Bike Club. These cross-country flow trails are mostly machine-made, about 3 feet wide, and have fun features such as jumps, rock rolls and bermed turns (not technical). This network has more than doubled in size over the past few years as new trails were built and connected the three areas together. All trails in this network are multiuse and are free and open to the public. Local tip: park at Base Camp and soak up the MTB community vibes and grab a drink. For more information visit killingtonmountainbikeclub.org.

While you're here ...

Take a thrill ride

The Beast Mountain Coaster at the Snowshed base area of Killington Resort offers a thrilling ride. The 4,800-foot-long alpine coaster twists and turns through the woods with 360-degree corkscrews that are sure to make you squeal! It's just one of the Adventure Center challenges.

By Paul Holmes

Enjoy the 4,241' view!

From the top of the K-1 Gondola, it's a short 5- to 10-minute walk to the top of Vermont's second highest mountain: Killington Peak. Enjoy the 360-degree views up the spine of the Green Mountains. It's a great spot for a picnic, too!

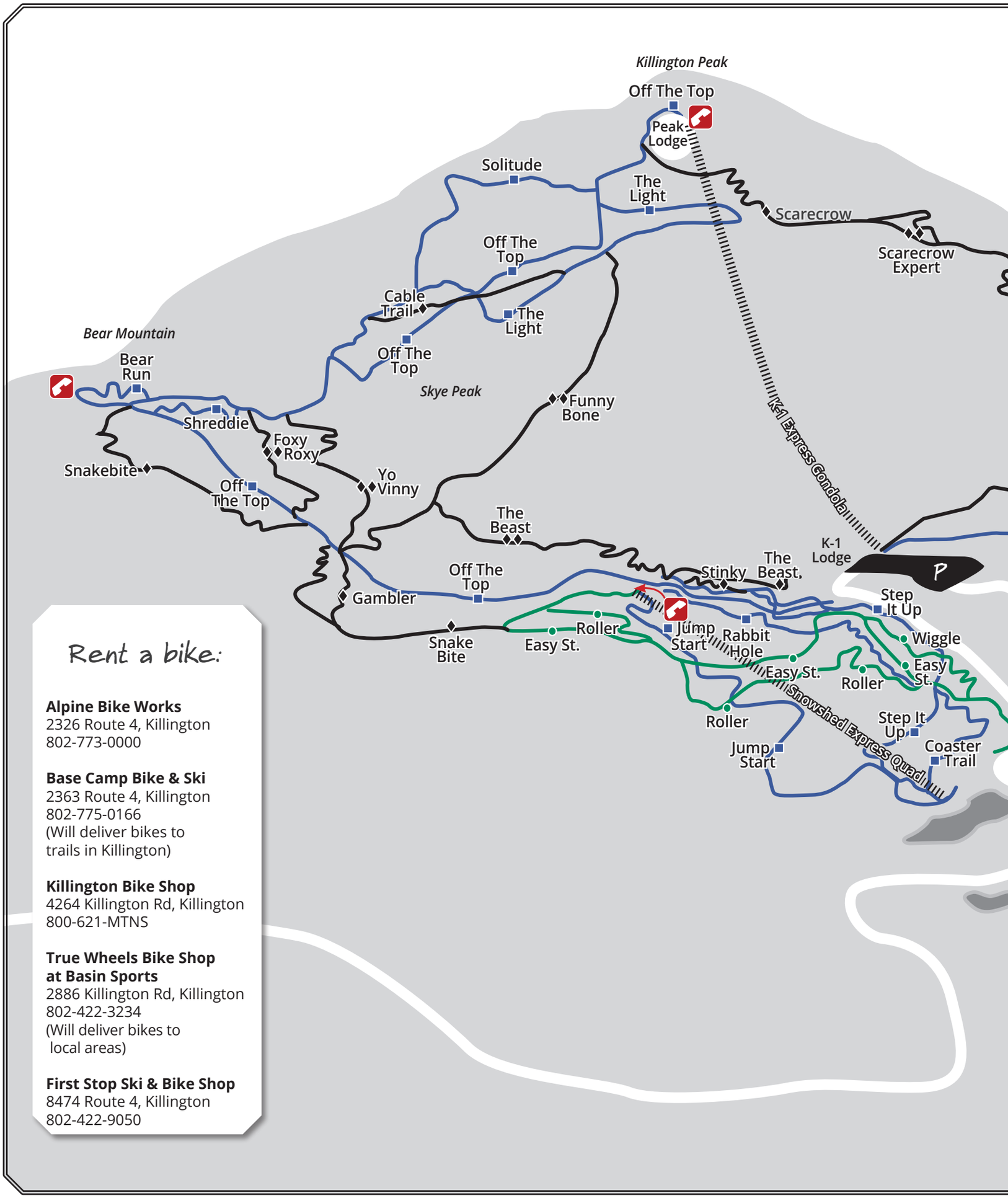
Paddle on a pond

Killington boasts two picturesque ponds: Kent and Colton ponds, both with access off Route 100. At Kent Pond has a designated boat launch area and is the larger of the two with great views of Killington mountain. Colton Pond is just a bit further north on Route 100. The boat launch is by the beach area. Go there for sunset and capture a stunning reflection.

By Merisa Sherman

Enjoy a picnic at a concert

Head to the Snowshed base area at Killington Resort for a free "Cooler in the Mountains" outdoor concert every Saturday from 3-5:30 p.m. July 1-Sept. 2. Grab a lawn chair, a beach blanket and the whole family for this all ages event. On-site bar and BYOB area provided!



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Base Camp Bike & Ski
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802-775-0166
(Will deliver bikes to trails in Killington)

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True Wheels Bike Shop at Basin Sports
2886 Killington Rd, Killington
802-422-3234
(Will deliver bikes to local areas)

First Stop Ski & Bike Shop
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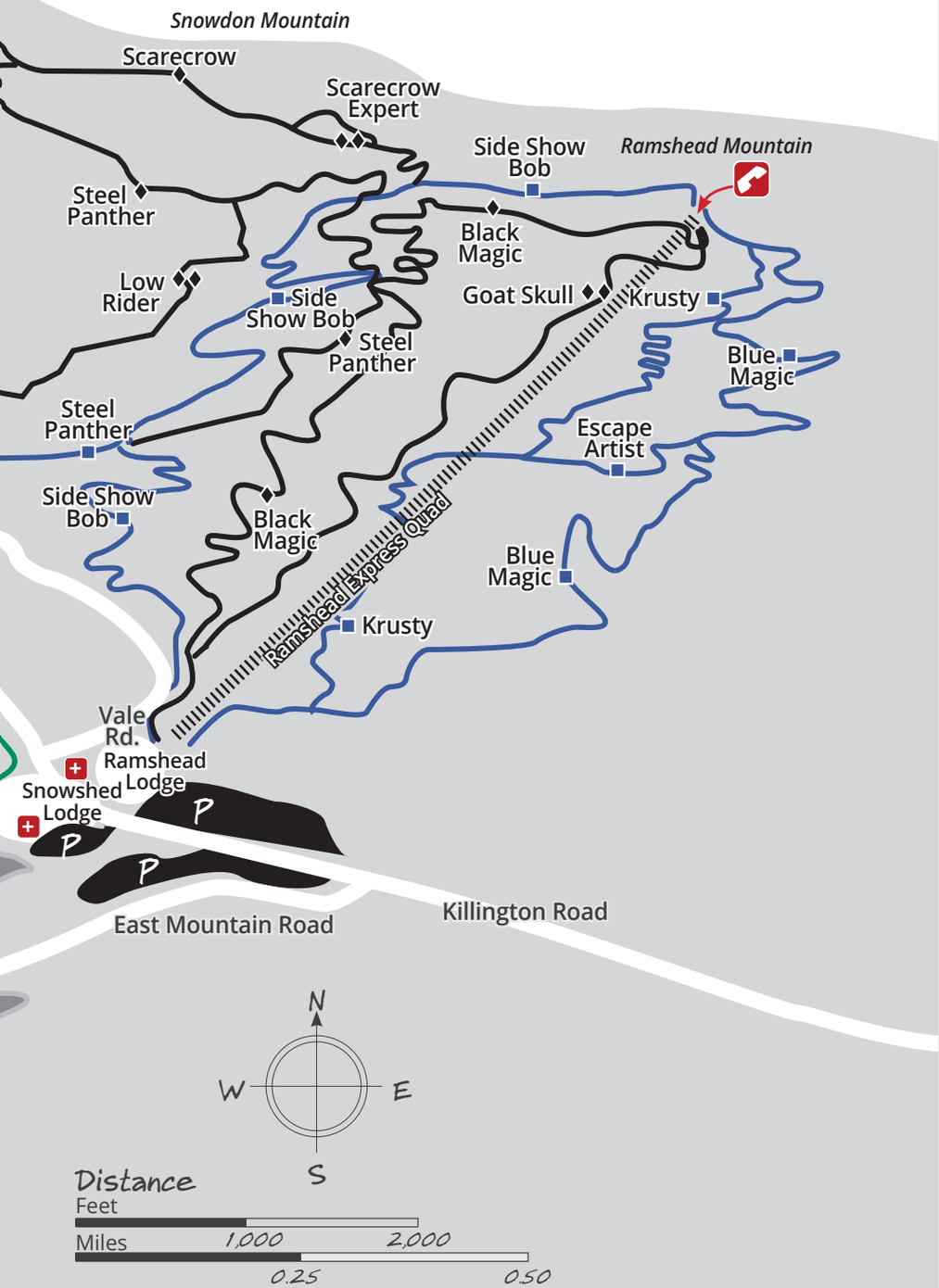
802-422-9050

Killington

BIKE PARK

Killington Resort

3861 Killington Road, Killington



Best ride to:

····· Start it

Easy Street and Wiggle are recommend for first time mountain bikers — and those looking to warm up, get a feel for new rental equipment or just need a confidence boost! Once comfortable, try Roller to practice berms. Some riders cruise these trails fast, so be aware. Don't be afraid to stop on the side and let others pass. For the smallest riders, there's a strider bike park at Snowshed, too.

-- Feel it

Step It Up at Snowshed is a great place to start for intermediate riders with berms and small jumps. Jump Start is also a great choice on Snowshed. If you venture over to Ramshead, start with Blue Magic, a serious jumps trail where it's fairly common for riders to hit speeds of 20 mph and get some serious air. Side Show Bob is a good choice if you are looking for a flow trail with rollers and berms with no jumps.

◇◇◇◇ Send it

The Cable Trail from the top of Killington Resort via the K-1 Gondola is a "must ride," a "classic Killington trail," according to advanced riders and trail builders alike. While the riding is technical and sure to challenge even the best, it's "not going to eat you," they assure us. Take Off the Top, then a left onto The Light, then a right to the Cable Trail — it's a fairly short section, but don't be fooled! Alternatively, try Scarecrow, a much longer trail from the Peak that brings you by Snowdon Mountain and ends at Ramshead base area.

Legend

- Parking
- Easy
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Expert
- Access Roads/ double track
- One way
- Roadway
- Emergency Phone
- First Aid
- Lift service

Best ride to:

Start it

Mind Eraser and Paca's Path on the Sherburne Trails are great for beginners, including first time riders. The wide machine-made trails offer relatively easy pedaling and minimal hills.

Feel it

Looking to get into some more technical riding? TBR to Betty Loop at the Base Camp Trails is a fun intermediate loop. Betty Loop has some rocky/rooty sections. Bonus: there's a great view of Kent Pond from the trail.

Send it

Ride TBR to Betty Trail to Archie Baker if you are looking to challenge yourself on some features. Archie Baker is packed with fun and unique rock rolls as well as some jumps and drops. There is a new feature to hit around every corner! Take the Picnic Table Cut Off back, or, if you are looking to get in more miles, continue on Betty Trail loop.

Legend

- Roadway
- Parking
- Easy
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Expert
- Access Roads/ double track
- One way

KMBC
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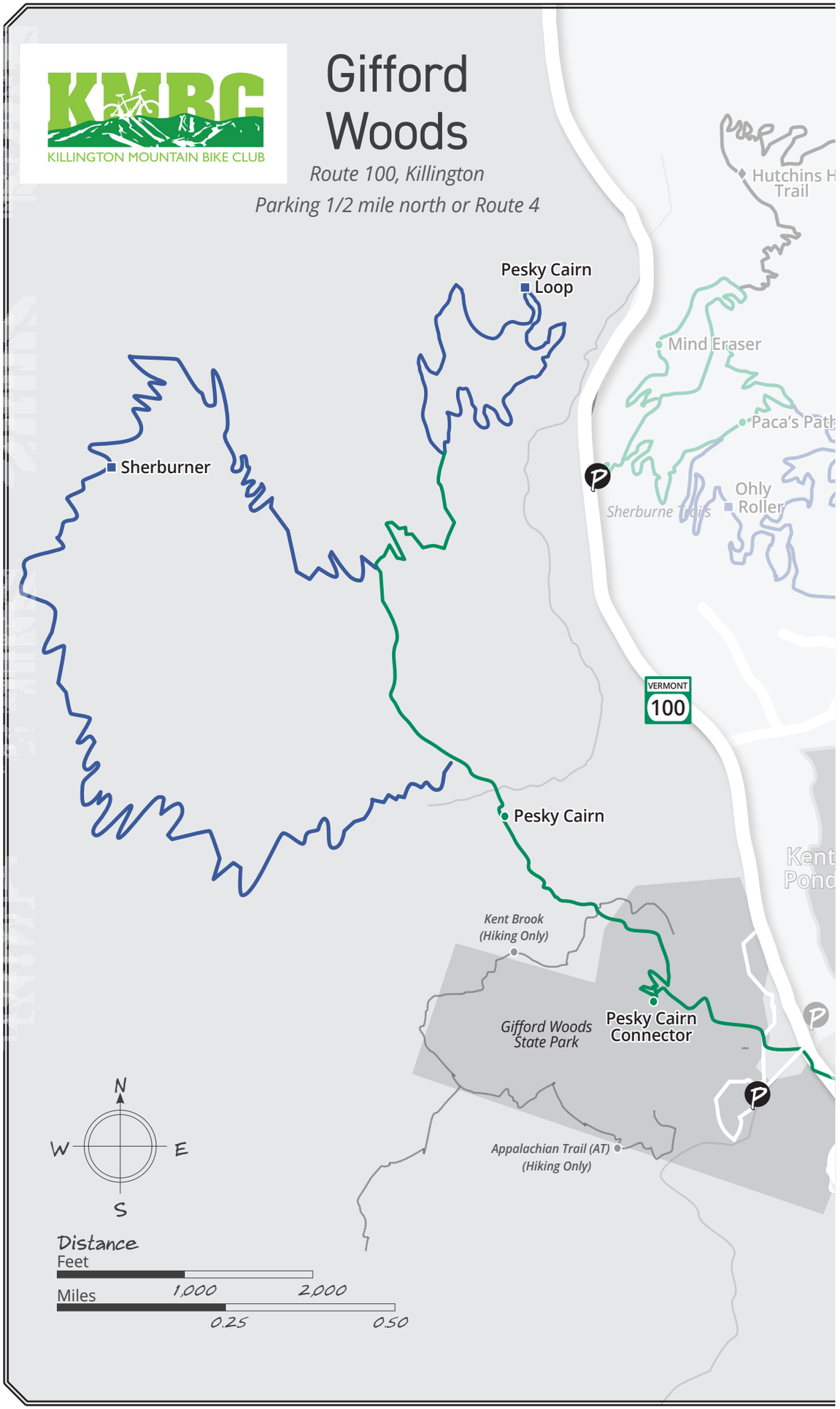
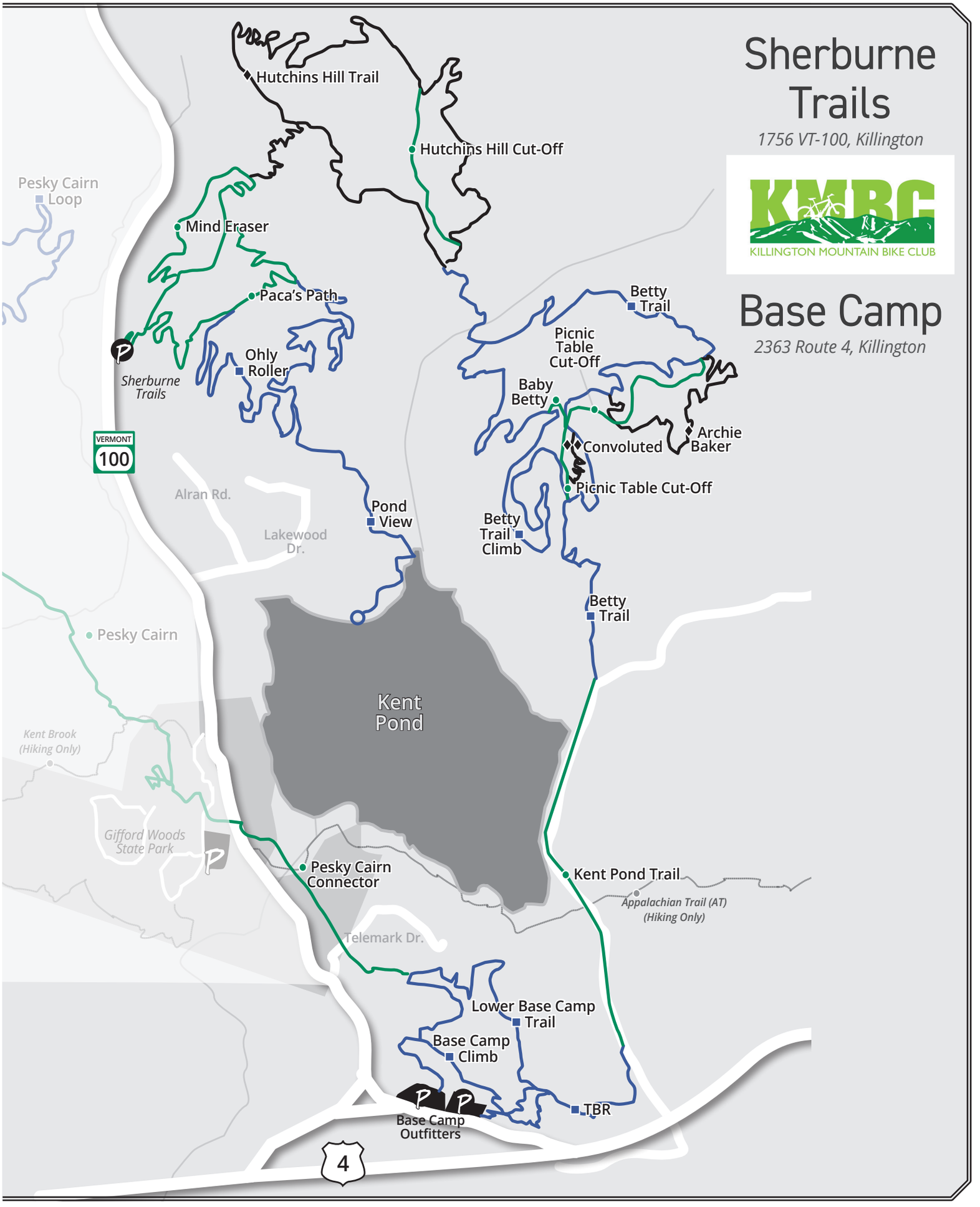
Gifford Woods

Route 100, Killington

Parking 1/2 mile north or Route 4




Sherburne Trails
1756 VT-100, Killington
KMBC
KILLINGTON MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUB
Base Camp
2363 Route 4, Killington
Hutchins Hill Trail
Hutchins Hill Cut-Off
Pesky Cairn Loop
Mind Eraser
Paca's Path
Ohly Roller
Sherburne Trails
VERMONT 100
Betty Trail
Picnic Table Cut-Off
Baby Betty
Archie Baker
Convoluted
Picnic Table Cut-Off
Alran Rd.
Pond View
Lakewood Dr.
Betty Trail Climb
Betty Trail
Pesky Cairn
Kent Pond
Kent Brook (Hiking Only)
Gifford Woods State Park
Pesky Cairn Connector
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TBR
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4

Killington

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Q&A with Ben Colona

Killington Mountain Bike Club

What makes the trails at Killington unique to the area?

Ben Colona: The variety of trails in the town of Killington sets us apart. We have the downhill park with beginner to expert terrain and we have the Sherburne trail system, which offers a great mixture of classic rocky and rooty New England single track as well as fast and flowy machine built trail for all ability levels.

What should first time riders know about these trails before they arrive?

Ben Colona: For beginner riders it's best to park at the Sherburne Trail parking lot and to start with that grouping of trails. For intermediate and better riders, parking at the Killington Welcome Center and Base Camp is the best place to start your ride.

What's your favorite trail and why?

Ben Colona: I like leaving out of Base Camp on TBR trail to Betty and Archie and then back to the trail head. That is a fun ride that you can easily make longer depending on the time you have. However, the new trail Sherburner is quickly becoming my new favorite because of the super fun and flowy downhill part of the trail that winds through a beautiful section of the Green Mountain Forest.

The bits of adrenaline that run through you when you find yourself in something challenging inspires me.

Selfie by Ben Colona

Ben Colona enjoys recreation year round in Killington, so does his young daughter!

Which is best for a beginner? Which would you recommend for an advanced rider who wants a challenge?

Ben Colona: Starting with Mind Eraser and Pacas Path at the Sherburne trail head is the best place for beginners. It is a machine built trail so it is wide and more beginner-friendly due to the layout of the trail. Once the rider feels comfortable on those two trails, then Pond View is a great out and back to the edge of Kent Pond and then the rider will be rewarded with a fun descent back to the parking lot via Ohly Roller. The advanced rider has a lot of options and can have a longer ride with a variety of trails mixed in. Archie Baker is a must-do for someone who likes a bunch of features packed into a trail. Also, Sherburner, our brand new trail for 2023 out of the Gifford State Park side of the network, is a must-do as it makes its way up to the top of the ridge with a moderate climb and the rider is rewarded with an extremely fun trail with berms and optional features to shred on your way back to the State Park.

When did you first get really into mountain biking? How did your passion begin?

Ben Colona: I got into mountain biking when I started working at Killington in the summer in 2009 (age 23), which was when my mind was blown to this whole other amazing sport that has become one of my favorite activities. There were some trails to ride at this time but we had to travel out of Killington to ride them. A lot has changed since then and now there are amazing options right here in Killington as well as all over Vermont.

Who or what inspires you when you ride?

Ben Colona: The bits of adrenaline that run through you when you find yourself in something challenging inspires me as well as the pure mental and physical satisfaction that I feel when I am done with a ride. No matter what is going on, I always feel better after a ride.

Do you have a favorite local spot you'd recommend for folks after their ride?

Ben Colona: You can't go wrong with any of the spots in Killington as they all have great food, drinks, and outdoor seating. However, I am a sucker for the Beast Chicken sandwich at the Lookout, so that is where I find myself after most rides.

Is there anything else local riders or visitors should know?

Ben Colona: I am very excited to see the sport grow in our region and all the amazing trails that it has brought with that expansion. With that said, all riders must respect these areas and systems with common practices. Such as pack in pack out, respect for other trail users, land owners, and nature itself. The majority of these networks are free to use and are there because of the collective efforts of the local mountain bike chapter, town, land owners, and state or federal land management. A lot of the work is accomplished through volunteers so if you like what you are riding and are able to donate time or money to the local chapter it will go a very long way for planning new trail as well as keeping the current trails riding great.

Courtesy Ben Colona, FB

Ben Colona gets some air during a KMBC Bike Bum race at Killington Resort.

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RIDE: Rutland

By Dave Jenne

Pine Hill Park & Redfield Trails

Pine Hill Park (PHP) offers 17 miles of single-track trail spread over 325 acres of terrain. Plus, the Carriage Trail and Redfield Trails add another 9 miles of longer-distance cross county routes primarily on old logging roads. This trail network is relatively easy to pedal and packs a lot of miles in a small area without having to take the same trail twice! Pine Hill Park also boasts seven unique bridges! You can ride them all in about 1.5 hours at an easy pace. (See icons on map.) These multiuse trails are free and open to the public for non-motorized use. For more information visit pinehillpark.org.

While you're here ...

Suspend your fears

Walk across a 30-foot long swinging suspension bridge and cool off in the river pools below. The bridge crosses above the Clarendon Gorge. Directions: take Route 7 south from Rutland, then Route 103 south for 2.3 miles. Look for the large Appalachian/ Long Trail parking lot on the right. It's a very short walk from there.

Visit the farmers' market

Stop by the Farmers' Market in Depot Park in downtown Rutland before or after your ride to fuel up on a variety of local foods. Offerings vary by season, but there's always lots to choose from. It's a great place to come to pack a picnic, too!

It's open from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturdays; and 1-5 p.m., Wednesdays.

Cast a line

East Creek, located just east of the Pine Hill Park parking lot, is a great place to fish. Stocked in the spring, anglers frequently pull out 16-20" rainbow trout! The ease of access can't be beat!

It's also great for spectating for those that like to witness the thrill without slimy fingers.

Catch a concert downtown

Friday Night Live returns downtown July 21, Aug. 11 and Sept. 1 with free performances by The Uprooted Band, Dirty Deeds - the AC/ DC Experience, and The Dave Matthews Tribute Band. Head to Center Street between Merchants Row and Wales Street. Grab a bite at a local restaurant or from a food truck!

Downtown Rutland Partnership

Best ride to:

Start it

Don't miss Voldemort, local rider Connor McGrath advises. "It has the smoothest berms and is non-technical." Here's a 2.4-mile loop with some climbing and fun descents: Escalator, Svelte Tiger, Sisyphus, Watkins Wood Rd, Sore Elbow to Milk Run, back up Watkins to Voldemort, Birches, Trillium, Svelte Tiger, Escalator.

Feel it

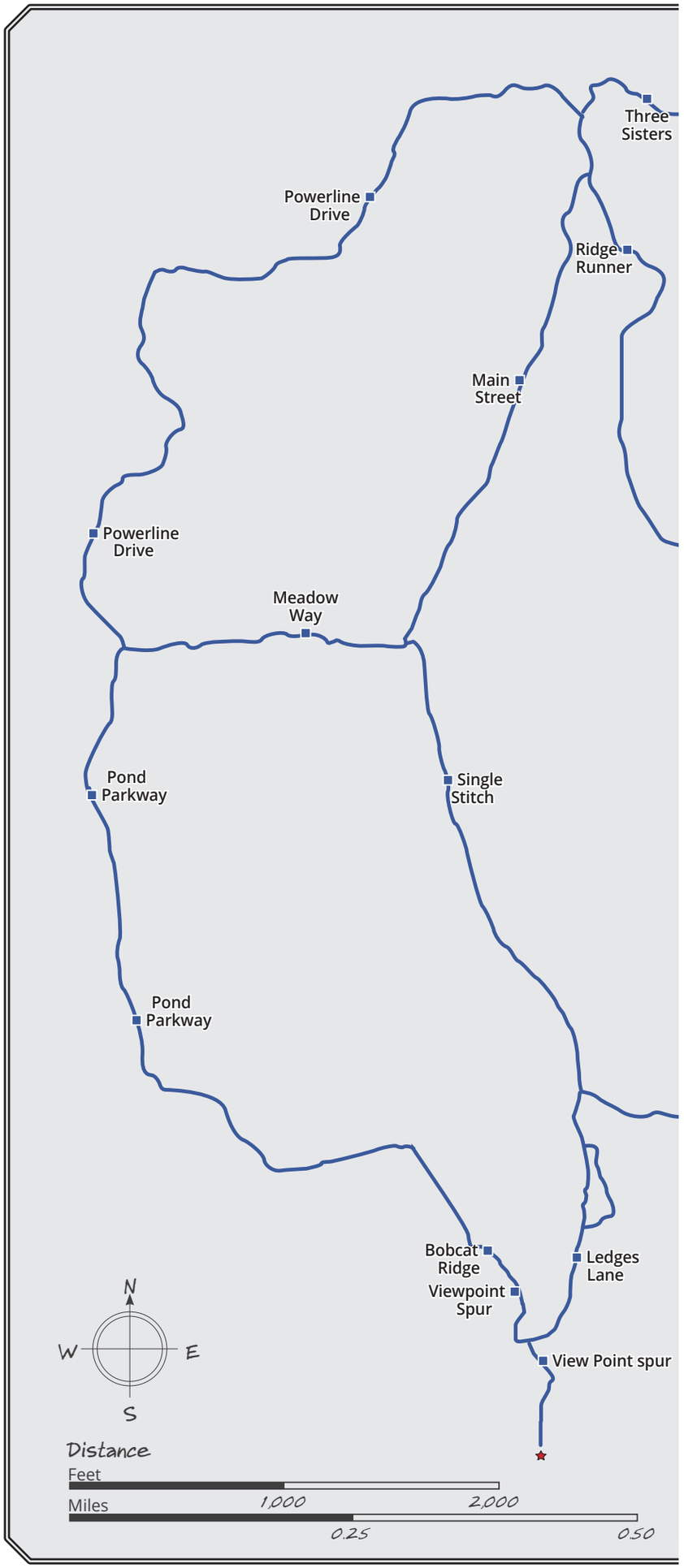
Make your way to the overlook to enjoy views of Rocky Pond and the mountains beyond. Here's a 5.2-mile loop: Escalator, Svelte Tiger, Droopy Muffin, Underdog, Shimmer, Overlook, PA4J, Strong Angel, Santa's Little Helper, Jigsaw, Milk Run, Watkins Wood Rd, Evergreen Falls, Furlough, Exit Strategy.

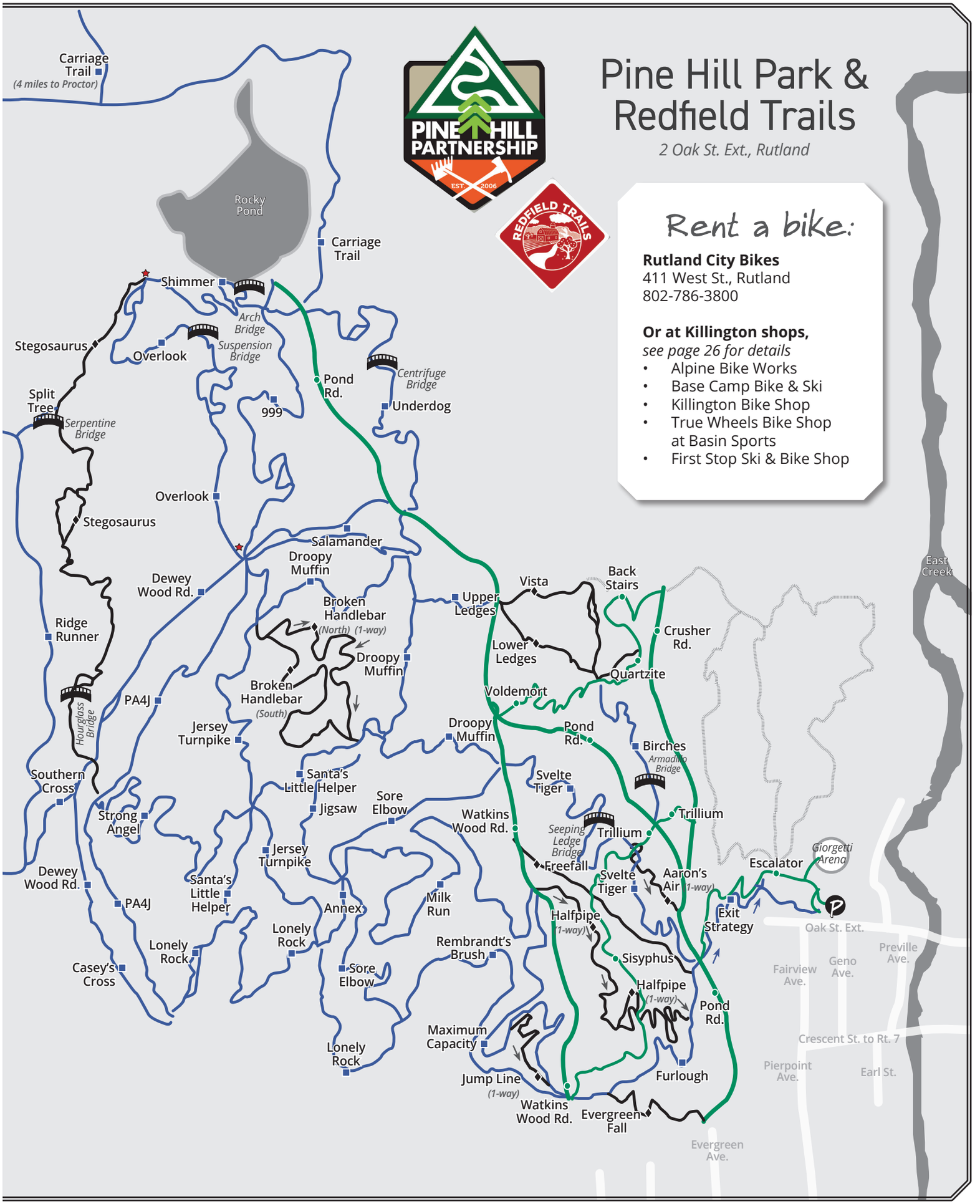
Send it

Get to the Half Pipe for an aerobic experience down the one-way singletrack. Here's a 5-mile loop: Escalator, Svelte Tiger, Trillium, Birches, Vista, Upper Ledges, Droopy Muffin, Overlook, Shimmer, Underdog, Salamander, Droopy Muffin, Broken Handlebar North, Santa's Little Helper, Jersey Turnpike, Lonely Rock, Rembrandt's Brush, Watkins, Halfpipe, Furlough, Exit Strategy.

Legend

- Roadway
- Parking
- Easy
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Expert
- Access Roads/ double track
- One way
- View

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Carriage Trail
(4 miles to Proctor)
Rocky Pond
Carriage Trail
Shimmer
Arch Bridge
Suspension Bridge
Stegosaurus
Overlook
Split Tree
Serpentine Bridge
Pond Rd.
Centrifuge Bridge
Underdog
999
Overlook
Stegosaurus
Salamander
Droopy Muffin
Dewey Wood Rd.
Ridge Runner
Broken Handlebar
(North) (1-way)
Droopy Muffin
Broken Handlebar
(South)
Hourglass Bridge
PA4J
Jersey Turnpike
Southern Cross
Strong Angel
Santa's Little Helper
Jigsaw
Sore Elbow
Jersey Turnpike
Dewey Wood Rd.
PA4J
Santa's Little Helper
Annex
Milk Run
Lonely Rock
Lonely Rock
Casey's Cross
Sore Elbow
Rembrandt's Brush
Maximum Capacity
Lonely Rock
Jump Line
(1-way)
Watkins Wood Rd.
Evergreen Fall
Upper Ledges
Vista
Back Stairs
Crusher Rd.
Lower Ledges
Quartzite
Voldemort
Droopy Muffin
Pond Rd.
Birches
Armadillo Bridge
Svelte Tiger
Watkins Wood Rd.
Seeping Ledge Bridge
Trillium
Trillium
Freefall
Svelte Tiger
Aaron's Air (1-way)
Escalator
Giorgetti Arena
Exit Strategy
Halfpipe
(1-way)
Oak St. Ext.
Sisyphus
Halfpipe
(1-way)
Pond Rd.
Furlough
Evergreen Ave.
East Creek
Fairview Ave.
Geno Ave.
Preville Ave.
Crescent St. to Rt. 7
Pierpoint Ave.
Earl St.

Q&A with Shelley Lutz
Pine Hill Park

What makes the trails at Pine Hill unique to the area?

Shelley Lutz: The trails at Pine Hill Park drain really well, so we tend to open earlier in the spring than other mountain bike trail networks in the state.

Pine Hill Park has a unique history. The park itself is over 100 years old — when a parcel of 273 wooded acres was donated to Rutland City. A few trails (old forest roads) in the park date back to 1920s and early 1930s. We began developing the mountain bike trail network almost 20 years ago, and many of our trails were built before mountain biking became so popular.

What should first time riders know about these trails before they arrive?

Shelley Lutz: It's Vermont, and it is not flat. Trail rating systems that denote beginner (green), advanced (blue) and expert (black) are based on trail tread, width, and features on the trail. The rating system does not take into account the aerobic piece.

What's your favorite trail and why?

Shelley Lutz: For riding out of the park, I'm pretty partial to Jigsaw, Milk Run, and Maximum Capacity. These three trails all flow together, and they are just fun to ride. I also like Overlook, Shimmer, Birches, Svelte Tiger, Sore Elbow, Underdog and Stegosaurus for the cool bridges that are unique to Pine Hill Park.

Trail rating systems that denote beginner (green), advanced (blue) and expert (black) are based on trail tread, width, and features on the trail. The rating system does not take into account the aerobic piece.

Which is best for a beginner? Which would you recommend for an advanced rider who wants a challenge?

Shelley Lutz: For beginner riders, I recommend Escalator, then turn right on the Pond Road, right on Crusher Road, left on Trillium, straight onto Sisyphus, right on Watkins Wood Road, right on Svelte Tiger. People see that the Pond Road is rated green, meaning it's a beginner trail. It's green because it's wide. It gets steep (remember the aerobic part is not rated in trail rating systems) after you pass the Crusher Road.

Pine Hill Park rides easier counter clockwise and trails tend to undulate a little bit more in that direction. So ride the outer trails clockwise if you are looking for a good aerobic workout.

Advanced riders will like Stegosaurus for the technical part and the two really cool bridges. A cool route for advanced riders is to ride Stegosaurus, then work your way to Broken Handlebar North, Jigsaw, Milk Run, Maximum Capacity, left on Watkins Wood Road to Upper Halfpipe to Lower Halfpipe, then out Exit Strategy.

When did you first get really into mountain biking? How did your passion begin?

Shelley Lutz: I first rode a mountain bike in 1980. I worked for UPS and delivered packages to a bike shop. While driving around Vermont in a UPS vehicle, I'd see all these cool logging roads and wondered where they went. Mountain bike-specific trails were not a thing at that time. I got into it because it's a great way to explore the Vermont countryside.

Who or what inspires you when you ride?

Shelley Lutz: I love being outside in the woods and seeing birds, flowers, critters, old cellar holes, stone walls in the middle of nowhere.

Do you have a favorite local spot you'd recommend for folks after their ride?

Shelley Lutz: In Rutland, I like to grab a sandwich or treat at The Bakery and Speak Easy Café in downtown Rutland. I'm a morning rider, so lunch when done is a great way to top it off.

Pine Hill Park rides easier counter clockwise and trails tend to undulate a little bit more in that direction. So ride the outer trails clockwise if you are looking for a good aerobic workout.

Is there anything else local riders or visitors should know?

Shelley Lutz: Trails do not maintain themselves. At 99% of the trail systems in Vermont, you do not have to pay to play. Please consider a donation back to the local trail organization that maintains and builds those trails. And try volunteering on a trail work day.

By David S. Jenne

Shelley Lutz leads trail rides and coaches clinics often at Pine Hill Park.

Q&A with Jess Sardelli

Mendon Mountain Club

What makes the trails in Mendon unique to the area?

Jess Sardelli: Mendon is a wonderful town located between two amazing mountain bike hubs (Killington and Rutland). We're hoping to bridge the gap between the two for an ultimate Mecca for biking and hiking trails in central Vermont. Check out updates with Velomont for exciting plans underway! We are a newer club and just getting started, which is very exciting as mountain biking continues to take off in popularity.

What should first time riders know about these trails before they arrive?

Jess Sardelli: We're a very new club and just getting started with clearing existing trails, maintaining, and expanding. Stay tuned for our future updates and openings! If you'd like to join our club, head over to VMBA and check out the Mendon Mountain Club!

What's your favorite trail and why?

Jess Sardelli: As we're linking arms with the Mendon Town and landowners, we are particularly excited about the Mendon Rec trails and expanding them. We'll hopefully have some fun trail names soon.

Which is best for a beginner? Which would you recommend for an advanced rider who wants a challenge?

Jess Sardelli: We'd recommend Pine Hill Park in Rutland for a great beginner experience that can progress as you do! For advanced riders who like a variety of terrain, definitely head up to Killington for their Gifford, Sherburne, and Base Camp trails. For some really technical riding, head over to Base Camp.

When did you first get really into mountain biking? How did your passion begin?

Jess Sardelli: I personally didn't have much experience with biking at all, being from a suburb in Maryland. When I moved up here in 2016, I was exposed through my friends and now husband. I quickly fell in love with biking and learned at the very trails I suggest to others. When our town, Mendon, created a task force for improving outdoor recreation, I was quick to hop on board and contribute to the ever-growing opportunities in trail development, with an emphasis on land conservation and enjoying our beautiful outdoors.

Who or what inspires you when you ride?

Jess Sardelli: When I go riding and I see so many wonderful people of all ages, I continue to be inspired. We have trails for any level of rider. I love seeing young children riding with families, and I wish to continue riding for decades to come just like the amazing locals I see out there.

Do you have a favorite local spot you'd recommend for folks after their ride?

Jess Sardelli: With the growing popularity in mountain biking, sooooo many awesome restaurants are now open in Killington and you really can't go wrong at any of them!

Is there anything else local riders or visitors should know?

Jess Sardelli: If you're looking to travel to come ride these awesome trails, the Mountain Sports Inn is the best place to stay (I may be biased...)

Q&A with Michael Zhao

Slate Valley Trails

Selfie by Michael Zhao

Michael Zhao rides on a sunny day.

What makes the trails at Slate Valley unique to the area?

The biodiversity and expansiveness of SVT's terrain is unmatched by any other trails I've ridden. Most regional mountain biking trails are built on one slope of a specific hill or mountain but SVT spans multiple sides of several peaks. This means you can climb multiple summits and experience half a dozen different kinds of habitat ranging from swamp to pine forest in the same ride or hike.

What should riders know about these trails before they arrive?

You don't need a fancy mountain bike—or even suspension—to enjoy most of SVT. I've been riding gravel bikes and touring bikes on the trails since 2018 and only bought my first mountain bike at the beginning of last summer.

What's your favorite trail and why?

The approach of Upper into Lower Birdie reminds me of the last few suspense-filled clicks of a wooden roller coaster reaching the apex of its initial ascent. After a steep climb through the woods, you enter a rocky ridgeline for a few hundred feet as you approach the peak and are rewarded with a panoramic west-facing view of the Slate Valley. You catch your breath, your heartbeat slows just a touch, and you remember you're about to descend one of the fastest trails in the network. Just like a roller coaster, it's all downhill from here.

Which is best for a beginner?

Merry-go-round off of the Fairgrounds trailhead offers an approachable introduction to off-road biking for cyclists of all skill levels. This wide and smooth trail features lots of wide rollers and sturdy berms that can be rolled slowly or attacked with vigor. Riders can choose their own adventure and gauge progress over time as they find themselves taking new lines and different approaches to the same obstacles.

Which would you recommend for an advanced rider who wants a challenge?

Hunker Down is the closest you'll get to a bike park trail without taking a lift. It's 30 minutes of climbing from either Endless Brook or the Golf Course trailheads rewards riders with roughly three minutes of jumps, drops, and berms that flow into each other like the chord progressions in your favorite guitar anthem. You'll want to go again before you've even reached the bottom, but it's a long way to the top if you wanna rock and roll.

When did you first get really into mountain biking? How did your passion begin?

I got into mountain biking through adventure cycling—that is, riding drop bar bikes on chunky terrain that likely violates the manufacturers' warranty policies. Analog Cycles is a local shop that's a touchstone of this community of cycling scene misfits and I first started coming to Poultney to attend their events. Before long, I was riding my gravel bike less on gravel and more on the trails with each successive visit. Once I moved here and finally had room to store a mountain bike, I bought one at the first opportunity.

Who or what inspires you when you ride?

I'm not big into races or films when it comes to motivation. I'm more

Continued on page 42

RIDE: Poultney

Slate Valley Trails

Slate Valley Trails has an extensive network of multiuse trails in Poultney, Wells and Castleton. Endless Brook Trails and the Fairground Trails in Poultney offer the most mileage, but there's been significant expansion at Delaney Woods in Wells over the past few years. Castleton University trails, a gravel ride network and the River and Rail Trail, a 3-mile multiuse trail around downtown Poultney, add to the offerings. In total there are over 50 miles of existing trails with more trails being built and imiproved each season. All are multiuse trails and are free and open to the public for non-motorized use.

For more information visit slatevalleytrails.org.

While you're here ...

Cool off, take a dip!

Let's be honest, at the end of most rides you're sweaty. Rather than wait for a shower, head to Lake St. Catherine State Park — at the base of Endless Brook trailhead — and enjoy a refreshing swim off a sandy beach. The park also has a variety of amenities, like bbq grills and picnic tables as well as a variety of boat rentals available.

By Polly Mikula

Camp out

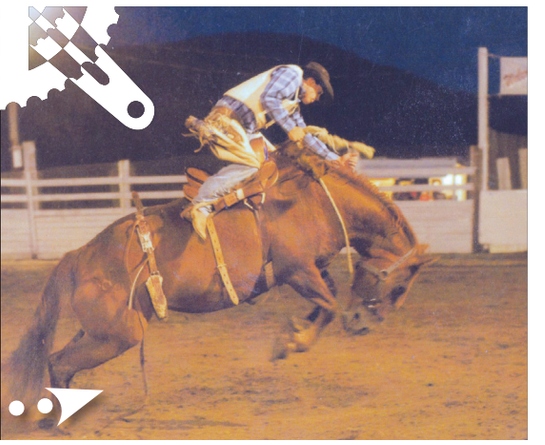
Lake St. Catherine (above) is an 852-acre lake in Wells and Poultney with a state park on its eastern shore. It has picnic areas, 50 tent/RV sites and 11 lean-to sites, two beaches and non-motorized boat rentals. Lake Bomoseen (right) is a 2,400-acre lake in Castleton and Hubbardton. It has two state parks with over 50 tent/RV sites, 10 lean-to sites, five cabins and one cottage available to rent.

Tour the historic town

The Poultney Historical Society has published an historical walking and driving tour brochure that will lead you on walking tours of downtown Poultney and East Poultney, and a driving tour of the surrounding hollows, farms, and quarries that together make up the history of the town. The society also offers three audio tours of Poultney hosted by Vermont's master storyteller Willem Lange. For more info visit: poultneyhistoricalsociety.org/tours.

Catch a rodeo

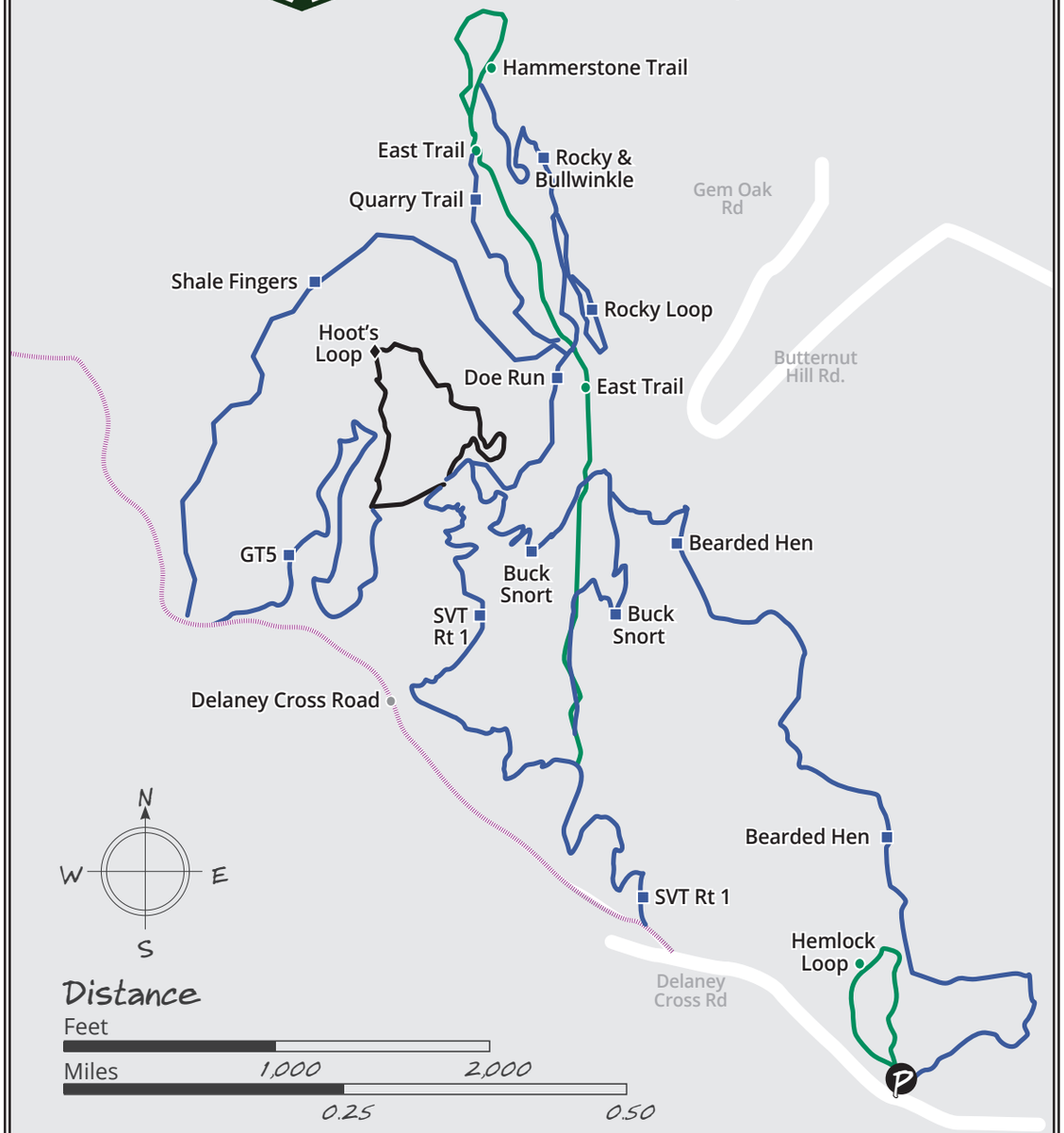
Pond Hill Ranch in Castleton has hosted rodeos for over 50 years and it's a show you don't want to miss! Events begin at 7:30 p.m. every Saturday in July and August. For a unique experience in Vermont, go watch these cowboys and girls rope and ride! For more information visit pondhillranch.com.



Delaney Woods

Delaney Cross Road off

North Street, Wells (across from Lakeside Park)



← *Continued from page 39*

inspired by the community that arises around the scene. Building, riding, and maintaining trails is a form of stewardship that brings us closer to nature and the fact that we get to have fun together while doing it is a true blessing.

Do you have a favorite local spot you'd recommend for folks after their ride?

I would be remiss not to recommend the Poultney Pub (formerly Taps' Tavern) for after-ride eats and drinks. Their locally-inspired food and drink menu is worth the trip on its own. But I'd also like to shout out the recently-opened Rail Trail Eatery across the street as a pre-ride breakfast spot. They always have something tasty and affordable on the specials board and their coffee is a cut above the other regional greasy spoons.

Is there anything else local riders or visitors should know?

Poultney's historic downtown has been going through a lot of changes as of late and it's an exciting time to take a closer look if you haven't been in a while. Analog Cycles opened a new storefront right on Main Street last spring that sells much more than just bikes (I hear there's a secret espresso machine behind the counter if you ask nicely). There's also a dedicated coffee shop in the works down the block, a new community arts space around the corner, as well as another mountain biking oriented bike shop called Porcupine Bikes opening down the street on June 22.

Other Slate Valley Trails:

Poultney River & Rail

3.4 miles

Castleton University

1.6 miles

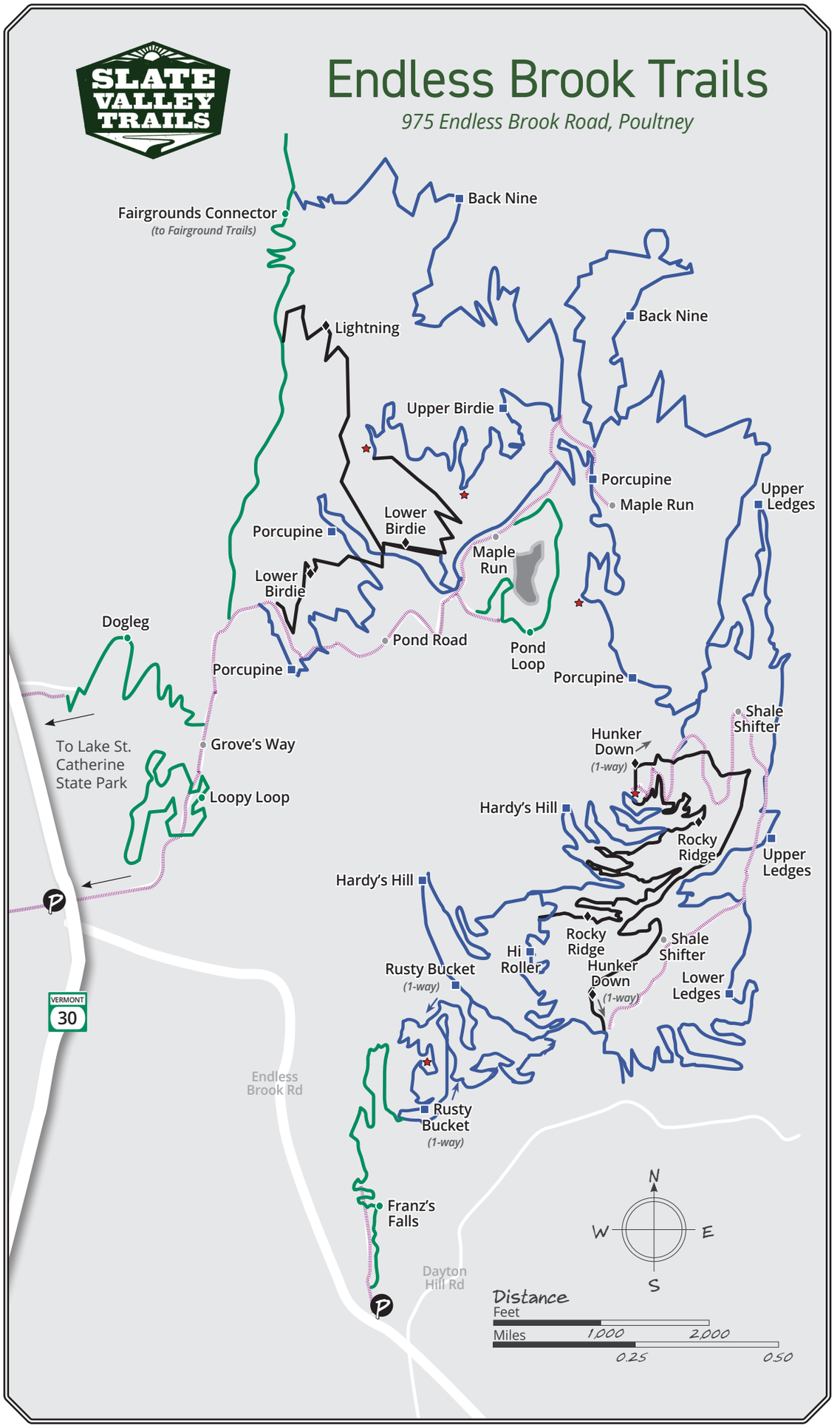
Gravel ride network:

16 gravel routes

All trails are multi-use.

Legend

- Roadway
- Parking
- Easy
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Expert
- Access Roads/ double track
- One way



Best ride to:

..... Start it

Head to Hardy's Hill (1.9 miles) via Franz's Falls and Rusty Bucket (N). Once you reach the highest point, the views of Lake St. Catherine are amazing, and so are the fast berms on the long descent. This can be ridden as an out-and-back or as a loop.

-- Feel it

Head for the Rusty Bucket Loop (1.4 miles). This narrow singletrack trail loop climbs and descends through open forest, featuring many tight turns and a beautiful overlook from the summit ledge. For an extended ride, connect with Hi Roller.

◇◇◇◇ Send it

Challenge yourself on Hunker Down, a 4,534-foot popular black diamond singletrack trail. It's for mountain biking only and one-way. It has a hard overall physical rating, but you'll be rewarded with a view from the top. There are fun rock rolls and jumps towards the bottom.

Rent a bike:

Analog
188 Main Street
Poultney, VT
802-304-0512

Johnson & Son Bikeworks
41Greenfield Lane
Hampton, N.Y.
518-282-9089

Porcupine Bikes
144 Main St. Poultney
802-884-8429

Best ride to:

Start it

From the trailhead take Maple Sugar until you reach the doubletrack trail intersection to your left. Take that trail until you reach Cotton Candy to the right or Clown Shoes to the left — both are a little over a half mile back to the double track.

Feel it

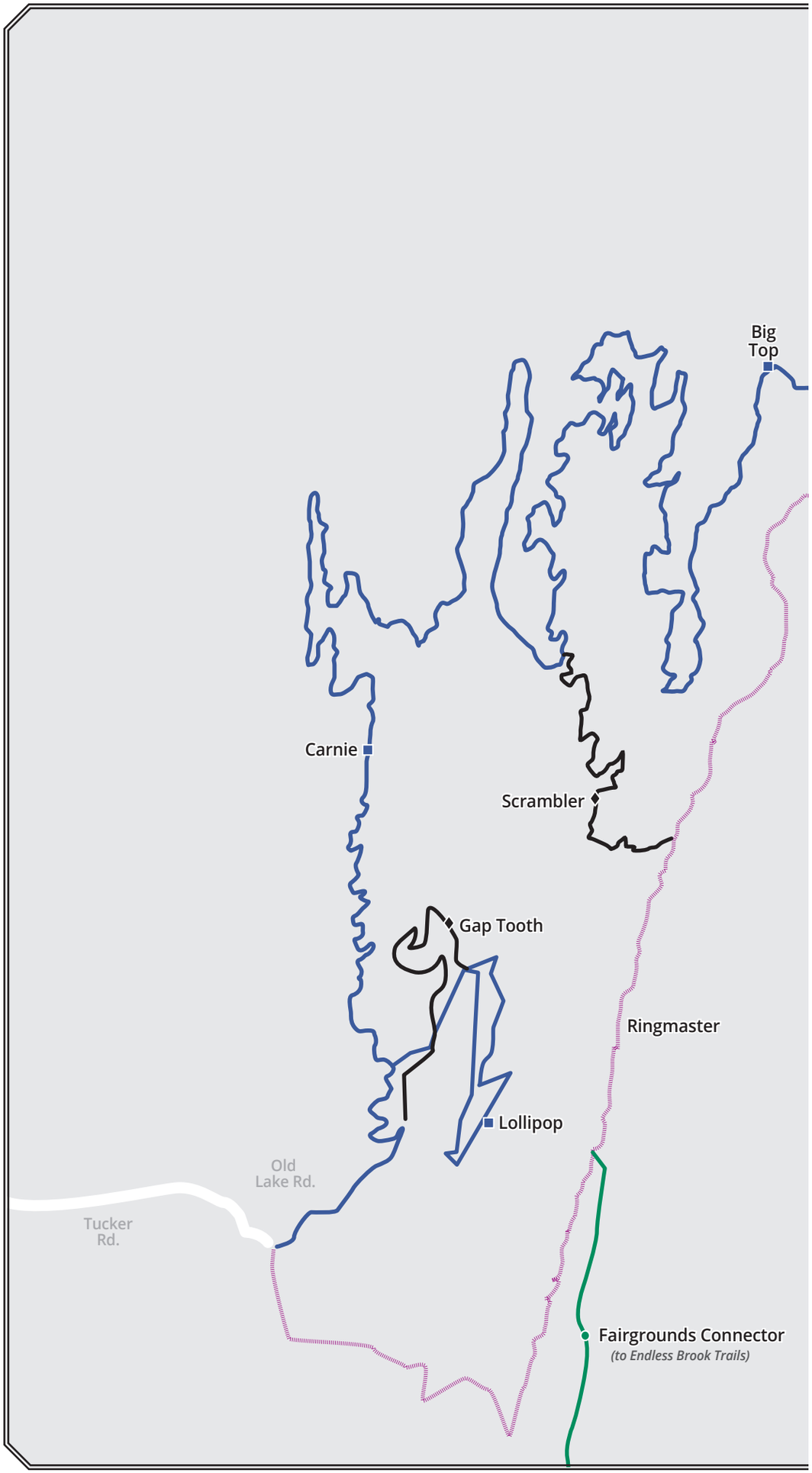
Merry-Go-Round is a 1.6-mile loop just to the east of the trailhead. The moderate singletrack trail is definitely a step up from the green loops, but rides smoothly with moderate natural features.

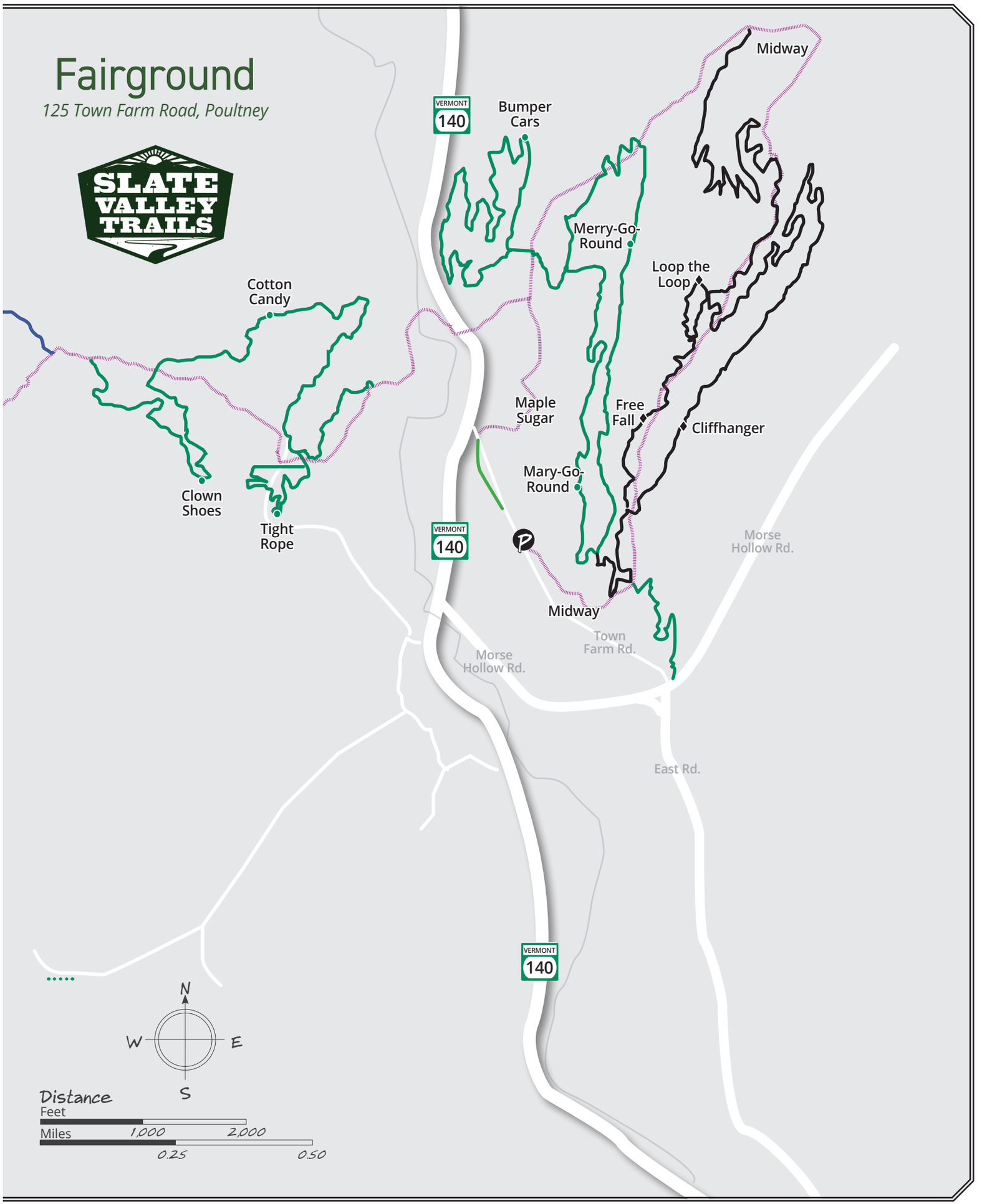
Send it

For an adventurous ride, take Cliffhanger (2.4 miles) up to Midway for some excellent views! Take Loop the Loop to Freefall for a different way down. There's another lookout on Loop the Loop with great views from the ridge.

Legend

- Roadway
- Parking
- Easy
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Expert
- Access Roads/ double track
- One way




Fairground
125 Town Farm Road, Poultney
SLATE VALLEY TRAILS
VERMONT 140
Bumper Cars
Midway
Merry-Go-Round
Loop the Loop
Cotton Candy
Maple Sugar
Free Fall
Cliffhanger
Mary-Go-Round
Clown Shoes
Tight Rope
Morse Hollow Rd.
Town Farm Rd.
East Rd.
N
W
E
S
Distance
Feet
Miles
1,000
2,000
0.25
0.50

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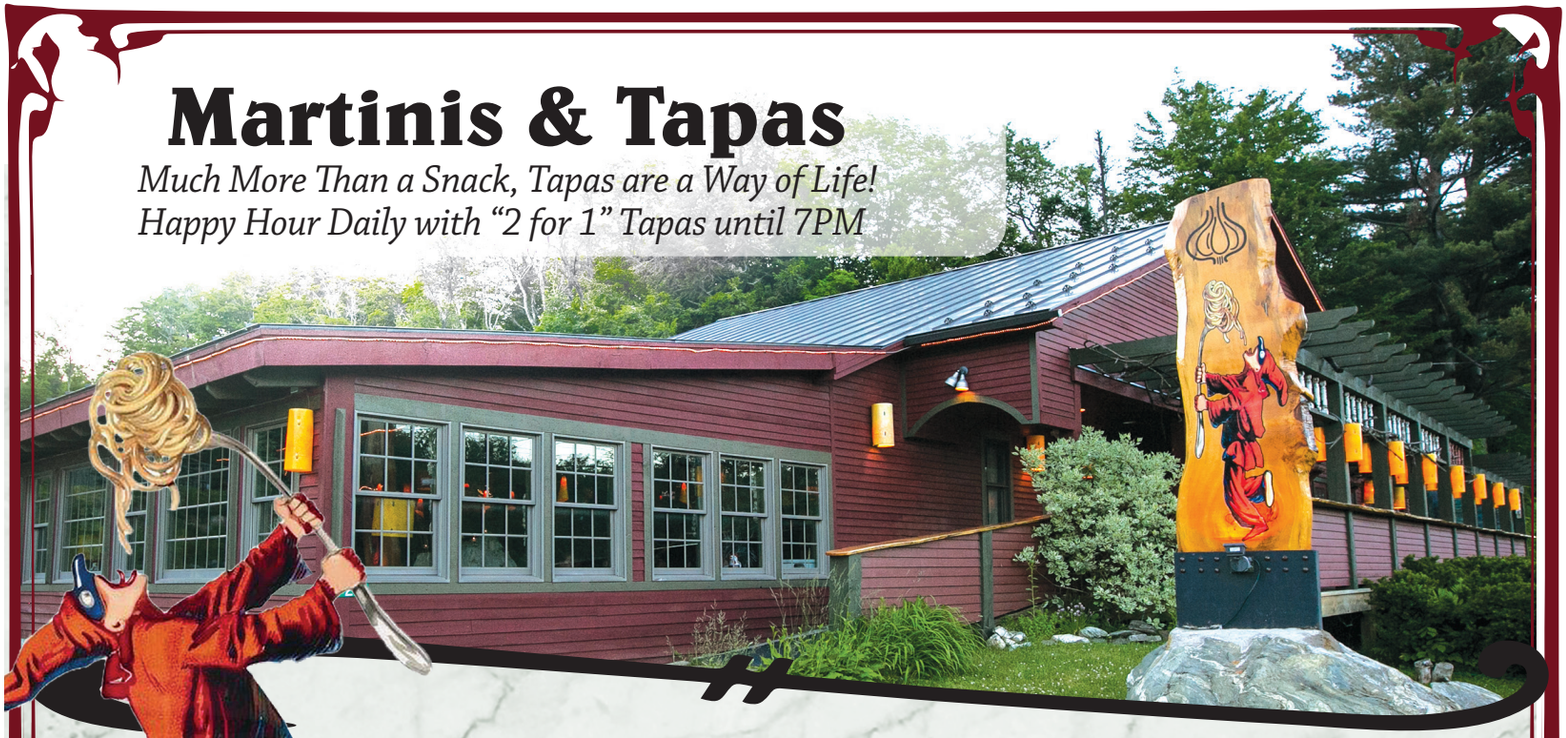

The Garlic is a casually sophisticated upstyle Italian roadhouse with an ambiance and menu reminiscent of the Tuscan countryside. Cozy booths, harvest tables, and warm lighting create a setting for both a romantic and memorable dining experience. The Garlic features a comprehensive wine selection, innovative daily specials, and if you wish, "lots of garlic."

the garlic

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RIDE: Woodstock

Aqueduct Trails

This network is comprised of 24 mountain bike trails over about 14 miles in West Woodstock. The flowy trails are great for riders of all abilities looking for a cross-country experience in the woods. A new pump track and ramps were added last year. This network is managed by the Woodstock Area Mountain Bike Association. The multiuse trails are free and open to the public for non-motorized use.

WAMBA

Woodstock Inn & Resort

Mt. Peg Trails

There are two trailheads that access this trail system, both off Route 106: Knox Meadows or the Woodstock Athletic Club. This network of trails is co-managed by the Woodstock Area Mountain Bike Association and the Woodstock Inn and Resort. The network offers everything from Enduro-style single track to grassy double track through meadows and woods. There is also a skills park at the base of Knox Meadow. The network's latest addition, the Village Trail, connects the summit of Mt. Peg directly to the Village. All trails are free to use.

While you're here ...

See raptors up close!

Just a short drive east to Quechee, is the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) where you can see a variety of raptors large and small up close and learn about research, avian wildlife and their rehabilitation locally.

Courtesy VINS

Visit Billings Farm

Visit Billings Farm & Museum and meet some of the award-winning Jersey dairy cows, draft horses, and sheep, then sample some Billings Farm cheddar cheese while you're there. The farm offers exhibits and events through the season. The farm is located at 69 Old River Road in Woodstock.

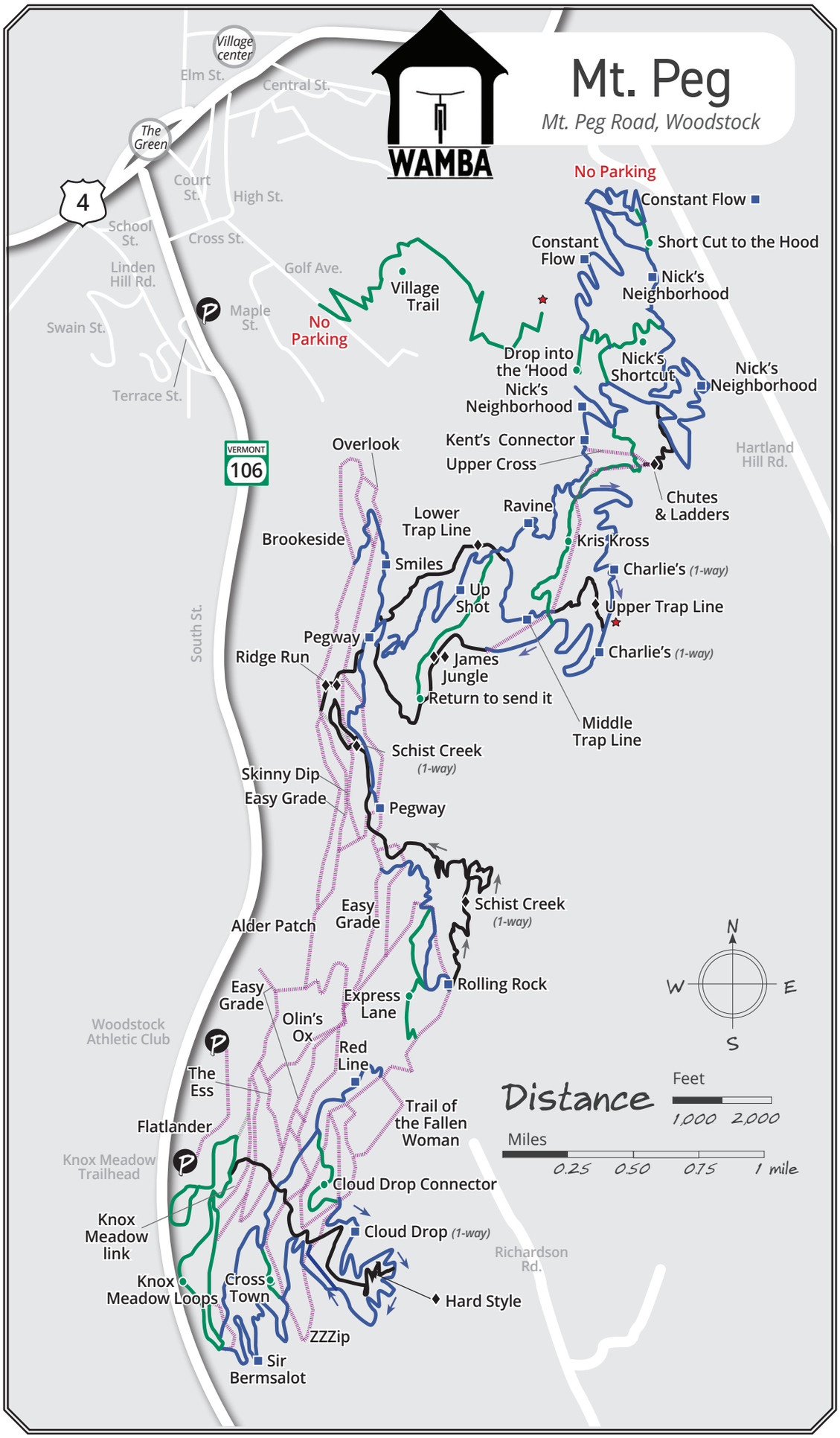
Hike Mt. Tom

Pack a lunch and hit the trails for this moderate hike. It'll take about 30 minutes. The summit offers stunning views of the village. The main entrance to the mountain lies within the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park and leads to a circuit of 150-year-old carriage roads that go to the summit. The views are impressive!

Stroll the quintessential Vt. village

Woodstock has been named "The Prettiest Small Town in America" by the Ladies Home Journal magazine, and both Park Street and Elm Street have won awards for intact historic streetscapes from the American Planning Association.

The Rockefellers had an enormous impact, which is still evident today.



Best ride to:

Start it

Head to the skills park at the base of Mt. Peg in the Knox Meadow. All level riders will have fun on log ladders, jumps, skinnies, and more. Play on our natural and man-made features to gain balance and improve your bike handling, while trying new tricks! It's a great place to start your day.

Feel it

Sir Bermsalot lives up to its name. It has just the right amount of tight turns for beginner riders.

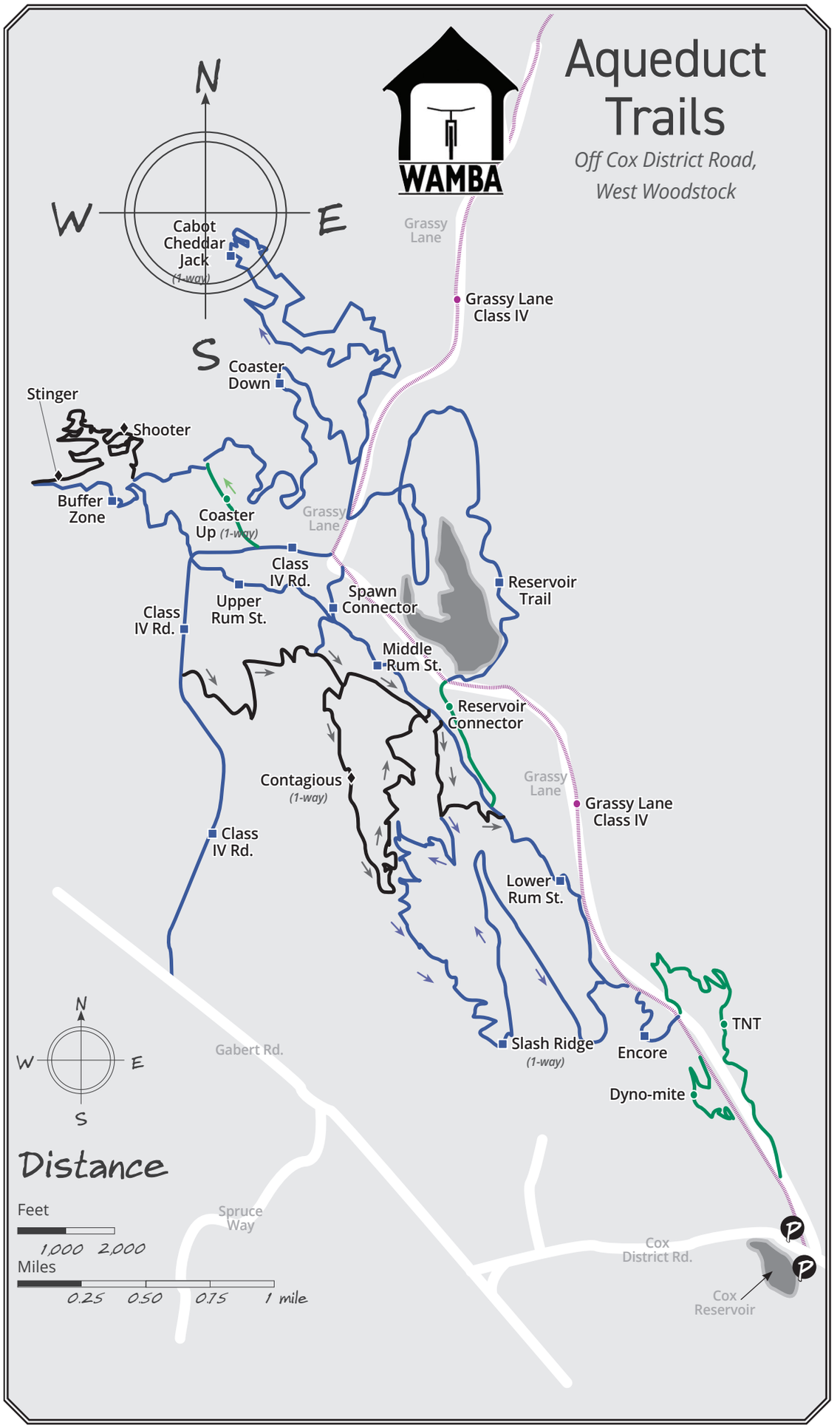
Send it

For an extra challenge take Upper Trap Line. The trail is linked by steep corners that are sure to throw you for a loop. Also check out Schist Creek, one of the newest enduro segments to be added to the Mt. Peg network. It features natural rock drops and steep narrow single track.

Rent a bike:

Woodstock Sports
30 Central St., Woodstock
802-457-1568
(Limited availability)

Woodstock Inn Activity Center
9 Cross Street, Woodstock
802-457-5530



Best ride to:

Start it

TNT is a flowy green trail that's ideal for first time riders looking to have some fun.

The Reservoir Connector is great for beginners, including first time riders. The trail features a bridge and singletrack trail.

Feel it

Take the Reservoir Loop for a more technical trail with a good downhill section. Coaster is a great flow trail with berms and jumps (toward the end). New this year, is Slash Ridge!

Send it

Spawn of Vaughn, a skinny trail with a rock garden, is perfect for advanced riders.

Legend

- Roadway
- Parking
- Easy
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Expert
- Access Roads/ double track
- One way
- View

Educators ride, race, lead by example

Editor's note: Over a decade ago, Mountain biking used to feel more like a niche sport. It was often dominated by "bro culture" and the trails were mostly extreme single track — an intimidating combination that kept many of us from considering it too seriously. Fast forward to today and all that's completely changed. Completely.

Now, it's more odd to learn that someone does NOT ride. To find an example of how universally pervasive the sport has become locally, you don't have to look further than your kid's school. The principals, teachers, special educators and students all ride, as do their parents. It's become the summer equivalent of skiing and snowboarding.

In order to highlight this change of culture and recreation in our community, local rider and parent Lorelei Danilchick identified inspirational riders in many of our local schools and asked them a dozen questions. We are thankful for their thoughtful responses, tips, tricks and honesty in sharing what makes the sport so valuable in their lives so others can relate and continue to enjoy the very best our region has to offer.

Choose your line and follow through

A tribe of mentors

By Lorelei Danilchick

My life as a Vermont mom includes a lot of wonderful things. High on the list is mountain biking. Low on the list is driving my kids to and from all of their activities. But as a life-long learner, I've become addicted to listening to books while I drive. Things could be worse.

Recently I listened to "Tribe of Mentors" by Tim Ferriss. This book is a compilation of interviews with people that are living their best life. They have reached their definition of success, they are at the top of their game. After listening to the book I realized that there were some common threads. No matter what your goals are in life, you need to be fit both physically and mentally in order to be your best self. On top of being fit, you have to be honest with yourself. Your definition of success is likely very different from the next person's. Your road must be your own.

This got me thinking about who I admire? Who are my tribe of mentors?

How cool is it to be able to live where you want to live, doing what you want to do? This is a level of success that many people never achieve in their life. This thought was the inspiration for this piece. We have some of the best educators in our public school system because they are living where they want to live, doing what they love to do.

Some of our teachers and administrators hunt, some fish, some ski (okay, most of them ski) and some of them are total badass mountain bikers. No, really! Try to keep up with them!

I decided to mimic Ferriss' book and sent a list of 11 questions to a handful of these hard-core humans and uncovered some inside information that inspires. I hope you enjoy reading their insights as much as I do.

Courtesy Mary Guggenberger

Killington Elementary School Principal Mary Guggenberger gathers with happy students in the gym.

Mary Guggenberger

Principal at Killington Elementary School

What are your favorite local mountain bike trails to ride, why?

Mary Guggenberger: I love Slate Valley Trails and Killington Mountain Bike Club. There is something for everyone in both of these trail systems; flowy berms, techy downhills, or punchy climbs. Beginners to advanced expert riders can get their needs met without traveling too far from home. With over 40 miles of trails at Slate Valley, riders can access trails for multiple days and not ride the same trail twice.

Do you have a favorite destination mountain bike location?

Mary Guggenberger: I have ventured to Valle-Bras-Du-Nord in Quebec one time prior to Covid and was amazed, maxed out, scared, and yet with a need to return for more adventure.

How does mountain biking affect your day-to-day life?

Mary Guggenberger: Like any sport, I want to do my best, have fun, and feel good while doing it. Nutrition, hydration, sleep, and regular strength exercises all impact my ability to be safe and have fun while mountain biking. I am conscious of practicing a healthy lifestyle on a daily basis so that I can maintain this level of activity.

Do you prefer to ride alone or with a group? Why?

Mary Guggenberger: Depends on the ride and if I am gearing up for an event, such as the Slate Valley Epic or Meeting of the Grinds. Sometimes I like to session on some technicals with a group of people and other times I prefer to be quiet on the trails with just the sound of my bike.

Continued on page 57

Sarah Hagge

English teacher at Woodstock High School

What are your favorite local mountain bike trails to ride, and why?

Sarah Hagge: Mt. Peg and the Aqueduct Trails have both come a long way, and I love that I can ride right from work at the end of the school day, or on the weekends with my family. We are also so lucky to have trails at Pine Hill Park, Gifford Woods, and Mt. Ascutney.

Do you have a favorite destination mountain bike location?

Sarah Hagge: Last summer, my family and I discovered a wealth of amazing mountain bike trails in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in Wisconsin. I highly recommend the ROAM campground as a basecamp for outdoor adventures there.

How doesmountain biking affect your day-to-day life?

Sarah Hagge: I bike to relieve stress, stay fit, connect with adults in the community, teach young girls to be "gritty", and bond with my family. My husband and both daughters are avid cyclists, and many of our family trips revolve around gravel or mountain biking. My family also competes in cyclocross races during the fall season.

Do you prefer to ride alone or with a group? Why?

Sarah Hagge: All of the above, depending on my schedule and daily preferences. I volunteer with the Woodstock Mountain Bike team and Gritty Girls in Rutland, and I enjoy the small group experience in those settings. Sometimes I prefer alone time and an opportunity to test my own limits on a trail by myself.

What is your favorite pre-ride meal or snack?

Sarah Hagge: If I'm about to race, I consume a bit of caffeine! If not, a granola bar or a gummy snack usually does the trick. Electrolyte drinks are key for long efforts.

Any rave reviews for your bike (make/model and why it rocks) or your car rack?

Sarah Hagge: Trek Supercaliber mountain bike (fast and responsive. All-City gravel bike (steel frame is durable and great at soaking up the washboards).

Have you ever named a mountain bike trail? If yes, what is the name and where is it? If no, what would you name a trail if you had the opportunity?

Sarah Hagge: When I helped build trails at Pine Hill Park, I suggested the name "Sisyphus"

Where did you grow up?

Sarah Hagge: Beverly, Massachusetts.

Why did you move to Vermont or stay in Vermont?

Sarah Hagge: My husband went to Castleton, and we fell in love with all the skiing and biking opportunities in the area. We also found a community through friends at the college and the Green Mountain Rock Climbing Center.

What book(s) do you recommend everyone reads?

Sarah Hagge: I'm an English teacher, so there are too many to name. But Angela Duckworth's book "Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance" seems relevant!

Do you have a favorite quote, mantra or saying?

Sarah Hagge: Family motto: "Choose your line and follow through."

Aaron Cinquemani

Principal at The Prosper Valley School

What are your favorite local mountain bike trails to ride, why?

Aaron Cinquemani: Boston-Lot in Lebanon, New Hampshire. If you can ride all of b-lot, you can ride anywhere.

Do you have a favorite destination mountain bike location?

Aaron Cinquemani: It's always nice to spend a day riding as a family in the Northeast Kingdom.

How does mtb affect your day-to-day life?

Aaron Cinquemani: It fills my bucket in every way. Physically and mentally and socially.

Do you prefer to ride alone or with a group? Why?

Aaron Cinquemani: I do prefer to ride solo. However, I never give up an opportunity to ride with friends and/or family.

What is your favorite pre-ride meal or snack?

Aaron Cinquemani: Nope, nothing specific. Dried cranberries are great for the pack.

Any rave reviews for your bike (make/model and why it rocks) or your car rack?

Aaron Cinquemani: Good ol' pickup truck tailgate will do. Custom built Rocky Mountain Instinct.

Have you ever named a mountain bike trail? If yes, what is the name and where is it? If no, what would you name a trail if you had the opportunity?

Aaron Cinquemani: I would name trails after my kids. They have wonderfully unique personalities and I have ridden a few trails in my day that remind me of them.

Where did you grow up? And why did you move to Vermont or stay in Vermont?

Aaron Cinquemani: Grew up in the Upper Valley on the New Hampshire side.

Courtesy Sarah Hagge

Sarah Hagge smiles with her daughter, Schuyler Hagge (left) after a ride. Hagge not only enjoys recreational rides but also loves to compete (right).

Todd Uva

Special Educator at Woodstock Union High School and Middle School

What are your favorite local mtb trails to ride, and why?

Todd Uva: There are so many fun and rewarding trail networks in our region. I find myself riding the Slate Valley Trails, Pine Hill, and Rochester quite a bit but my favorite trails are in my hometown of Woodstock. Our local VMBA chapter, the Woodstock Area Mountain Bike Association (WAMBA), has done an outstanding job creating a diverse network with long flowy gems such as Slash Ridge at the Aqueduct and Cloud Drop at Mount Peg and more technical offerings such as Jame's Jungle and Schist Creek at Mt.Peg. There is something special about riding trails that you help build and maintain. In Woodstock, it's not uncommon to hear riders say, "That trail never gets old, it always puts a smile on my face," and I can't agree more. Just seeing the amount of out of state cars with bikes in Woodstock and new faces on the trails is a testament to the quality of WAMBA's trails.

Do you have a favorite destination mountain bike location?

Todd Uva: My family has traveled to Quebec and we are planning to go again this summer. The network at Valle Bras du Nord is surrounded by beautiful scenery and has creative and unique trails that follow along rivers and streams dotted with waterfalls. The trails are uncrowded and more remote than anywhere else I have been. This summer we will also be visiting other networks on our trip including Empire 47 and Sentiers du Moulin. Quebec is earning a reputation as a must-ride destination in eastern North America.

How does mountain biking affect your day-to-day life?

Todd Uva: When I moved to Vermont I was all about skiing but over time I have become all about riding dirt. During the winter months I fat bike when conditions permit, but I'm always thinking about warm-weather riding and less about skiing. As the volunteer coach of the Woodstock High and Middle School team, I spend five days a week on my bike in the fall. Whether it is instructing a new rider or kidding myself by trying to keep up with the team's fastest riders, I'm always on a bike. Biking helps me stay physically and emotionally fit and while I don't see myself on an e-bike in the near future I'm excited that they may help me access and extend my riding as I age. I can't imagine myself not riding a bike. My family is also all about bikes as my son is a member of the school team and races cross country and enduro regionally and my wife, Angel, is the behind-the-scenes coach helping me with all aspects of our team. In the summer, I instruct mountain biking for our school district's summer enrichment program. It is not uncommon for members of our community to reach out to me about trail networks, bike recommendations, or any other bike-related questions. Biking truly permeates my day-to-day life.

Do you prefer to ride alone or with a group? And why?

Todd Uva: One thing I have come to appreciate is that where I'm riding is not as important as who I'm riding with. As a coach, I look forward to riding with our team and I love the shenanigans and post-ride fun of the weekly WAMBA rides. You learn so much from riding with others. Riders interpret and ride trails differently which can open up new lines and show you ones to avoid. Following a gifted rider down a descent can be a thing of beauty. The social aspect of riding is important to me so I rarely ride alone. When I do, it is likely because my schedule does not allow me to ride with others.

What is your favorite pre-ride meal or snack?

Todd Uva: While an avid cyclist but not a racer I put more thought into my post-ride snacks and beverages. All kidding aside, this is an area I need to pay more attention to personally. I'm not a competitor, but making sure you are hydrated and have proper nutrition leading up to and during a ride is important. My son and wife do a great job of thinking about nutrition and hydration by preparing preride meals and snacks to support his racing. Recently, they have been experimenting with salted maple syrup for fuel during races. I've learned a lot from them and from my son's Nordic coach when it comes to nourishing the body and avoiding certain foods before a competition. I hope to emphasize this more with our team this coming season as our racers have become more competitive and dedicated to their personal success.

Any rave reviews for your bike (make/model and why it rocks) or your car rack?

Todd Uva: The great thing about this sport is that there are so many well-designed bikes and components to choose from that it's hard to not find a bike that will suit your needs. I'm a big fan of my mulleted Ibis Mojo 4. It is perfect for the mix of flow and tech that we have here in Vermont. As far as a bike rack, I'm a 1 Up USA fan. I have had so many racks over the years that couldn't withstand the elements and that aren't adaptable to the changes in bike design. My 1 UP has been nearly flawless for 8 years and the company has great customer support. It's the only rack I recommend. My current setup is ideal and uses racks on the bedrails of my truck with a retractable cargo cover allowing full access to my truck bed. I haul a lot of bikes to races and this has proven to be a great setup. I regret that I didn't buy a 1UP sooner because I spent a lot of money on racks that were not as versatile and reliable.

Courtesy Todd Uva

Educators not only ride but ride in costume!

Have you ever named a mountain bike trail? If yes, what is the name and where is it? If no, what would you name a trail if you had the opportunity?

Todd Uva: This question makes me laugh because WAMBA received a grant from Cabot Cheese to build a new trail at the Aqueduct network and I was part of a never-ending text chain trying to find a creative name with a cheese reference. While we never actually agreed on a name there were certainly some entertaining suggestions. We still need to name that trail officially. While I have never named a trail, I believe you need to take into consideration a trail's personality and history before bestowing a name.

Where did you grow up?

Todd Uva: I grew up in the small town of Hamden, New York, which has a population of around 1,200 people. It's a beautiful town in the Catskill Mountains.

Why did you move to Vermont or stay in Vermont?

Todd Uva: My wife and I enjoyed the rural life of the Catskills but wanted a place with more outdoor recreation. In high school, I visited Vermont on ski trips and I always envisioned myself living here.

Continued on page 57

Jamie Sudol

School Nurse at Killington Elementary

What are your favorite local mtb trails to ride, and why?

Jamie Sudol: My favorite local trails are the Green Mountain Trails in Pittsfield. They are some of the first trails I started riding many years ago and I return to them time and again. They can't be beat for a great climb and an amazing view when you reach Shrek's Cabin.

Do you have a favorite destination mountain bike location?

Jamie Sudol: My husband and I love to bike wherever we travel. We have ridden some great trails in England, South Africa, Nova Scotia and more. However, for a quick destination we love the Kingdom Trails.

How does mountain biking affect your day-to-day life?

Jamie Sudol: Mountain biking is an important part of daily life during the warmer months. I bike almost every day in the summer and whenever I can get out after work once the daylight allows it. Mountain biking keeps me sane, fit and gets me outside.

Do you prefer to ride alone or with a group? And why?

Jamie Sudol: I prefer to ride with one or two other people who are at or slightly above my level. I don't like to stop too much to chat when I ride so big groups are not always for me. Family days when I get to ride with my husband and son are the best but my son is leaving for college in the fall so our family rides are numbered!

What is your favorite pre-ride meal or snack?

Jamie Sudol: I'll admit I'm a big carb lover so I usually carry some kind of granola bar in my fanny pack. I stay hydrated with my camel back fanny pack. I love this pack because it makes drinking and riding easy. For years I rode with a fanny pack that carried two water bottles and drinking while riding was always a challenge.

Any rave reviews for your bike (make/model and why it rocks) or your car rack?

Jamie Sudol: I love my Liv Hail. I am short and the XS frame fits me perfectly. I mostly cross country but downhill on occasion so this Enduro bike does it all.

Have you ever named a mountain bike trail? If yes, what is the name and where is it? If no, what would you name a trail if you had the opportunity?

Jamie Sudol: I have never named a trail. When the Aqueduct trail "Contagion" was named during Covid, I put in my suggestion "Going Viral" but I was told it was too close to home during Covid. My husband named the new Sherburner in the Gifford Woods network.

Where did you grow up? Why did you move to Vermont or stay in Vermont?

Jamie Sudol: I grew up in northern New Jersey near Mountain Creek ski area. I grew up skiing and started snowboarding in 1990 and never went back to skiing. My family would come to Killington every few years for a ski getaway and I always loved it here. I was in graduate in Boston the fall of 1992 and was not liking city life. A childhood friend of mine had graduated from Castleton College and was working for Killington. She told me to take a semester off and come live with her. I never went back! I went to nursing school at Castleton instead.

What book(s) do you recommend everyone reads?

Jamie Sudol: I am an avid reader. I love the classics such as Jane Austen and the Bronte sisters and Charles Dickens. I don't think many young people read these kinds of books anymore which is a shame because they are filled with history, romance and rich language.

Do you have a favorite quote, mantra or saying?

Jamie Sudol: My mantra is "That which does not kill me makes me stronger." Life is tough. Sometimes we have to face challenges head on. Mountain biking makes me strong and keeps my head on straight — LOL.

If you were to give advice to a Vermont kid graduating from high school, what advice would you give?

Jamie Sudol: My son is graduating from high school this year. I tell him what I tell every young person... Find physical activities that you love and do them for life and for fun. Life is about balance. Work hard and play hard. The key is to find a career that brings you fulfillment. You shouldn't dread going to work, you should look forward to it. Also, make time to take care of yourself and continue to do the things you love no matter how busy life gets.

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PLAN YOUR MOUNTAIN BIKE ADVENTURE OR VOLUNTEER TODAY

VERMONT ADAPTIVE Ski & Sports

E-bikes allowed on mtb trails?

UVM study surveys perceptions

By Polly Mikula

Class 1 electric mountain bikes (eMTBs), categorized as mountain bikes that are pedal assist only, have no throttle, and have a maximum speed of 20 mph, have been growing in popularity. While some trail networks have begun to set policies around eMTB usage, directions of future policy remain largely undetermined in Vermont.

The Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont, in collaboration with the national not-for-profit advocacy organization PeopleForBikes and the local not-for-profit Fellowship of the Wheel, conducted a study last year to gauge the perceived impacts of eMTBs on physical trail conditions, user impacts, education outreach opportunities and diversity and inclusion implications.

The study concluded: "Overall, perceptions of eMTB usage were more positive than negative, and indicated a general willingness and even motivation to enable further integration of eMTBs into the sport. Emergent themes centered around aspects of trail safety, accessibility, physical trail impacts, rider etiquette, and numbers of users."

"Most user conflicts can be solved by using good trail etiquette. I ride eMTB often throughout the U.S. and Canada and have had no issues. I ride with courtesy and a great attitude. Most trail users have no idea I am riding anything but a bicycle," one riders said in the survey.

The UVM report emphasized that there was support for eMTBs' accessibility in the sport. "Participants noted both that people who had never been able to mountain bike because of a physical disability, or had to retire from the sport, now had an opportunity to continue to enjoy mountain bike trails."

"They greatly increase accessibility for those with limited physical abilities and improve the inclusivity of the sport," on survey respondent wrote. "I think the negative opinions about them stem largely from a lack of familiarity and understanding of how they work, along with people's own fears about the possibility of changes in their own physical capabilities in their lifetime. I don't think people really understand that eMTBs are not like dirt bikes!"

Participants also noted that riders often switch to eMTBs so they can continue to ride at the pace of their friends or family members who may be younger or more able-bodied, according to the study.

"Anything that helps people get out to recreate outdoors is a win. Someday I too may need the assistance and wouldn't want to miss out. Let's determine what actual extra damage is caused before we act," one respondent concluded.

← *Continued from page 52*

What is your favorite pre-ride meal or snack?

Mary Guggenberger: Oatmeal or brown rice and sweet potatoes. I also put electrolytes in my water bottle and carry extra water in a bladder. I find that nutrition and hydration the day before a ride greatly impacts my performance rather than intake on the day of a ride.

Any rave reviews for your bike (make/model and why it rocks) or your car rack?

Mary Guggenberger: I'm not super techy. I rely on the shops and my husband for those stats. I feel super comfortable on the Ibis Ripmo. It goes anywhere and over everything! Total confidence bike. I prefer to carry my bike inside the vehicle. I am fortunate to have access to a van when my husband and I ride on the weekends. Great for changing clothes at trail heads, too!

Have you ever named a mountain bike trail? If yes, what is the name and where is it? If no, what would you name a trail if you had the opportunity?

Mary Guggenberger: I would need to ride it first. Depends on if I felt pain or joy from the ride.

Where did you grow up?

Mary Guggenberger: Leicester, Vermont, near Lake Dunmore.

Why did you move to Vermont or stay in Vermont?

Mary Guggenberger: I live for the outdoors and the recreation offered by the mountains. Western mountains are fun to visit. Green Mountains are my home. Why leave a good thing?

What book(s) do you recommend everyone reads?

Mary Guggenberger: Realistic or historical fiction, or memoirs. I love history when it is blended into a story, particularly from the Industrial Revolution Era. The growth pains of America fascinate me.

If you have one related to mountain biking, please share.

Mary Guggenberger: I love to hike as well. "The 4000-Footers of the White Mountains: A Guide and History" by Steven D. Smith and Mike Dickerman is a captivating book regardless if you have aspirations of hiking any or all 48 of them.

Do you have a favorite quote, mantra or saying?

Mary Guggenberger: "You've got this!" Or, "You'll thank me later."

If you were to give advice to a Vermont kid graduating from high school, what advice would you give?

Mary Guggenberger: Some of the hardest tasks are the most satisfying and rewarding. Don't give up because something is hard. Persevere because you owe it to yourself to give it your best shot. Whether the task is a 40 mile mountain bike ride or the pursuit of a career, give it all you got so that regret doesn't snatch your reward.

← *Continued from page 54*

What book(s) do you recommend everyone reads?

Todd Uva: "Mastering Mountian Bike Skills" by Brian Lopes and Lee McCormack is my go-to reference for all things bike skill related. It is a great reminder that no matter how much we ride we are always learning. I turn to this book to refine my skills and to help me instruct others. I have given this book as a gift to several friends that were new to the sport.

Do you have a favorite quote, mantra or saying?

Todd Uva: "Slow is smooth and smooth is fast." We use this saying with the bike team and I hear it Nordic races as well. This is applicable to all aspects of life.

If you were to give advice to a Vermont kid graduating from high school, what advice would you give?

Todd Uva: Be adventurous and don't be afraid to try something new! Whether it's a job, an academic class, a sport, or travel, you will learn something about yourself and others. It allows you to make all kinds of discoveries and can lead you to places you might never have imagined. When I threw my leg over a mountain bike for the first time I had no idea the joy it would bring, the relationships it would foster, and the opportunities it would create for myself, my family, and others.

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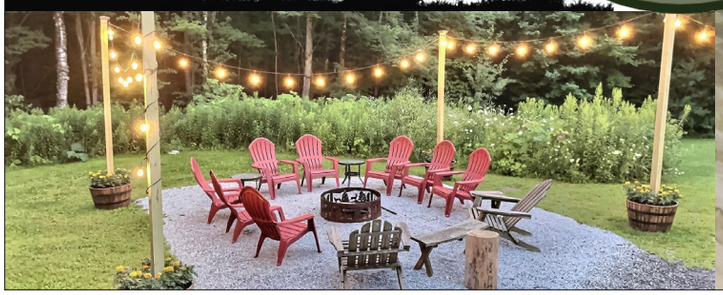

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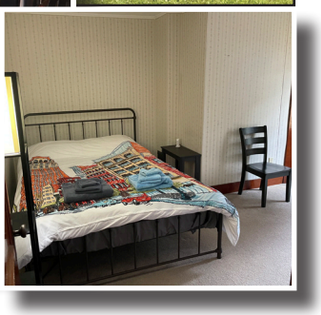

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RIDE: Pittsfield & Rochester

Green Mountain Trails

This multiuse network covers over 25 miles with singletrack trails and 1,000-foot vertical in Pittsfield — intermediate and advanced riders will enjoy these trails most. Though most of the trails are relatively smooth and flowy, there are several miles of rooty, rocky, technical singletrack, and over 100 bermed switchbacks. Descents can be as long as 6 miles. Park at the top of Tweed River Road (off Route 100N). Parking is prohibited at Riverside Farm and on Route 100.

Rochester Valley Trails

The Ridgeline Outdoor Collective (formerly Rochester/Randolph Area Sport Trail Alliance or RASTA) creates sustainable trail and glade networks for non-motorized activities including mountain biking. The Ridgeline Outdoor Collective also maintains a pump track at the Rochester Elementary/High School and Randolph recreation fields, as well as a network of five trails including beginner, intermediate and advanced rides at various locations throughout Rochester and Randolph.

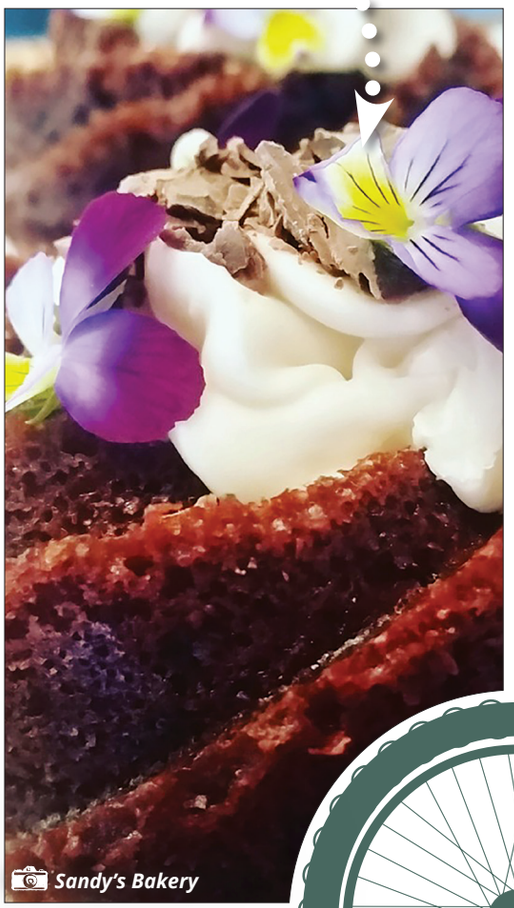
While you're here ...

Indulge with a pastry and a book

Sandy's Books & Bakery is a community staple. Stop to enjoy the fantastic baked goods, bagels, soups, salads, quiches and so much more, while perusing an electric selection of literature. A must-experience for anyone passing through! You want to return — and bring your friends!

Harvest your own snack

After a ride, pick fresh, organic berries at Rochester Valley Trails neighboring site — Sunshine Valley Berry Farm. In-season berries begin with strawberries, then raspberries to blueberries in July, then fall raspberries to blackberries in August and September. The farm offers a peaceful atmosphere of pick-your-own rows, or purchase pints of already harvested berries. The raw honey and homemade jams are also local favorites!



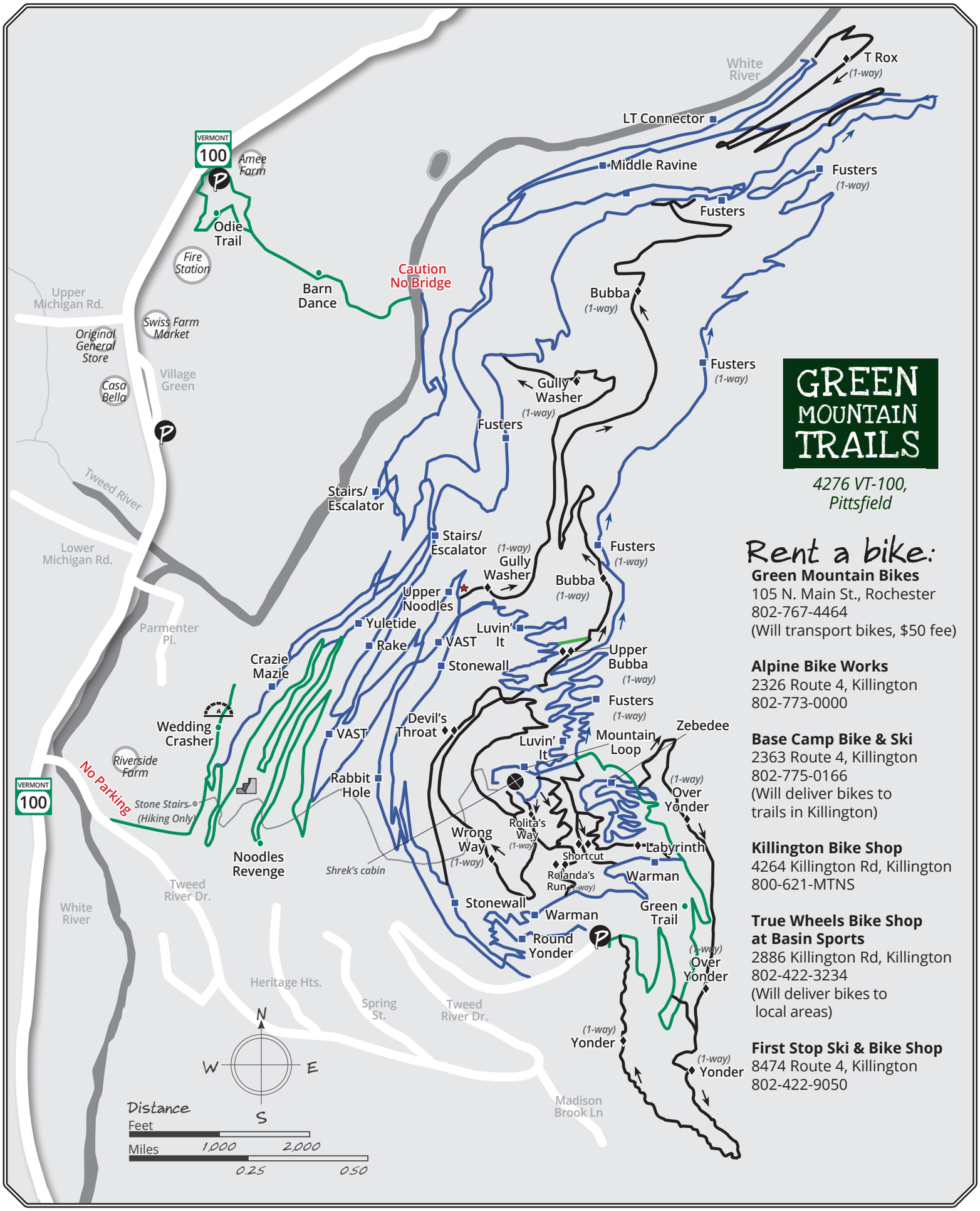
Sandy's Bakery

Enjoy a creemee

Riders looking for the ultimate summer dessert can find creemees (a.k.a. Vermont soft serve ice cream) at two locations in Rochester: get a famous maple creemee at North Hollow Farm Store just north of the Forest Service building on Route 100N or get an old fashioned chocolate/vanilla twist at the Skip Mart, the only gas station in town.

Experience culture

Looking to get out of the rain on a Saturday afternoon? Head to the BigTown Gallery (adjacent to Green Mountain Bikes) for a little culture. Owner/director Anni MacKay is also on the board of the Ridgeline Outdoor Collective, so the conversations could be cross-genre!



Rent a bike:

Green Mountain Bikes
105 N. Main St., Rochester
802-767-4464
(Will transport bikes, $50 fee)

Alpine Bike Works
2326 Route 4, Killington
802-773-0000

Base Camp Bike & Ski
2363 Route 4, Killington
802-775-0166
(Will deliver bikes to trails in Killington)

Killington Bike Shop
4264 Killington Rd, Killington
800-621-MTNS

True Wheels Bike Shop at Basin Sports
2886 Killington Rd, Killington
802-422-3234
(Will deliver bikes to local areas)

First Stop Ski & Bike Shop
8474 Route 4, Killington
802-422-9050

Best ride to:

Start it

Advanced beginners should try Zebedee, a turny ride with some technical elements, which is why it's marked as a blue/intermediate ride. Riverside Run (which connects Amee Farm and Riverside Farm) and the Green Trail (which leads you to the summit) are marked green and are easier rides.

Feel it

Luvin' It features bedrock so close to the surface that much of the trail is exposed ledge. This trail is a vital link to Shrek's Cabin, a stone hut at the top of the mountain with gorgeous views. It's a must-see destination and a great spot for a short break or a picnic.

Send it

On Fusters you will feel the burn. Visit the scenic waterfall on this black, which crosses many small ravines and a couple of larger ones which lend the trail its natural swoopiness. It's some rugged terrain to build in.

Legend

- Roadway
- Parking
- Easy
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Expert
- Hiking only
- View
- Stone Steps
- Muddy's
- Shrek's Cabin

By Polly Mikula

Two women enjoyed the view from Shrek's Cabin after riding the Green Mountain Trails.

Rochester Valley Trails

99 Ranger Road, Rochester

Best ride to:

Start it

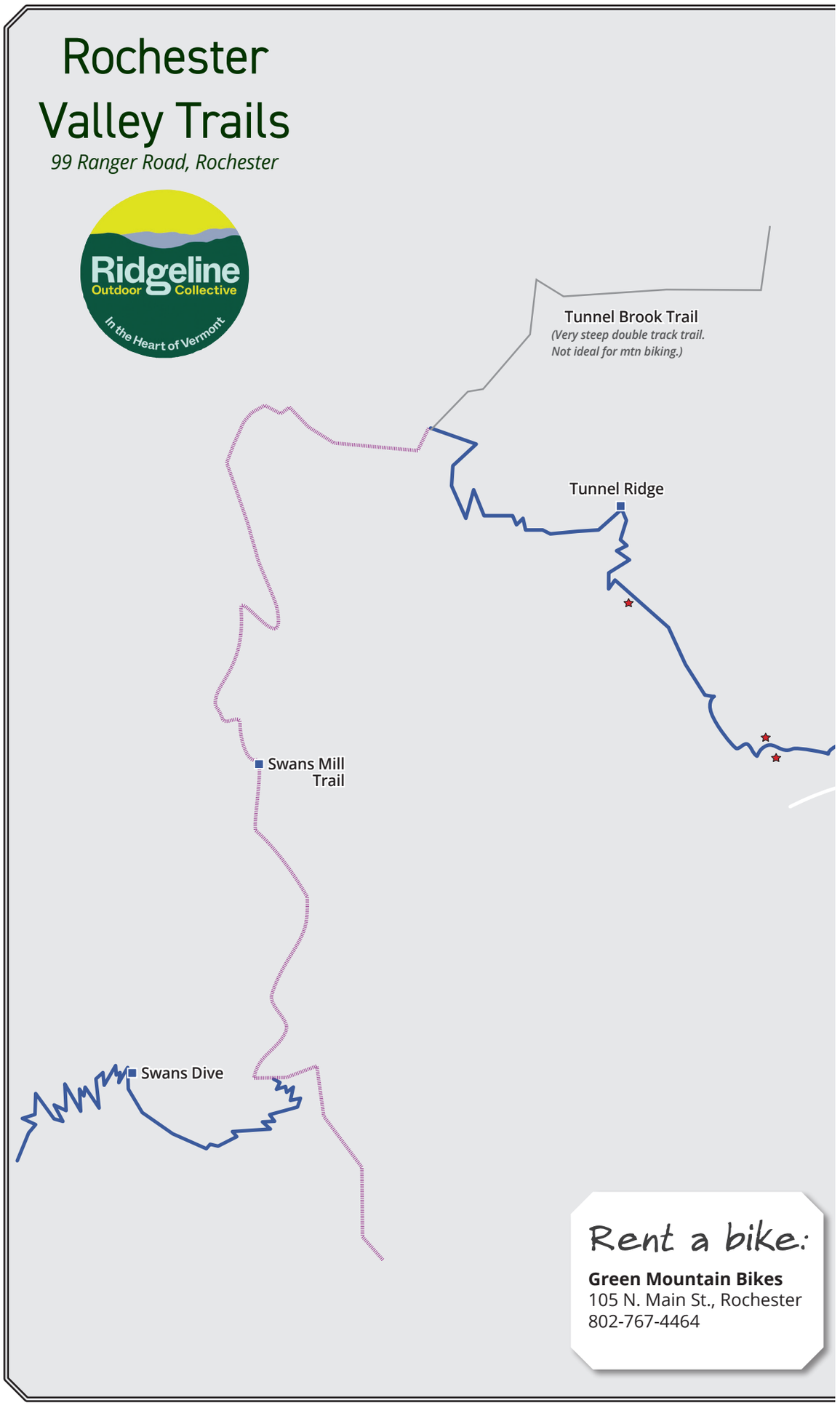
Sap Boiler is a beginner trail that takes off from the USFS Ranger Station Visitor Center on Route 100 north of the village of Rochester. The dirt track is machine-built with wide berms and bridges to make for an easy, fairly smooth ride through the woods. The section, 0.7 miles, connects with a 1.3 mile loop trail.

Feel it

For a bit more of a ride continue on Old Gent's. It's an intermediate challenge.

Send it

If you're up for it after that, continue onto Atlas for ride that will challenge your technical skills and endurance. Atlas connects to Brooke Street, for an alternative exit.



Legend

- Roadway
- Parking
- Easy
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Expert
- Access Roads/ double track
- One way
- View

Rent a bike:

Green Mountain Bikes
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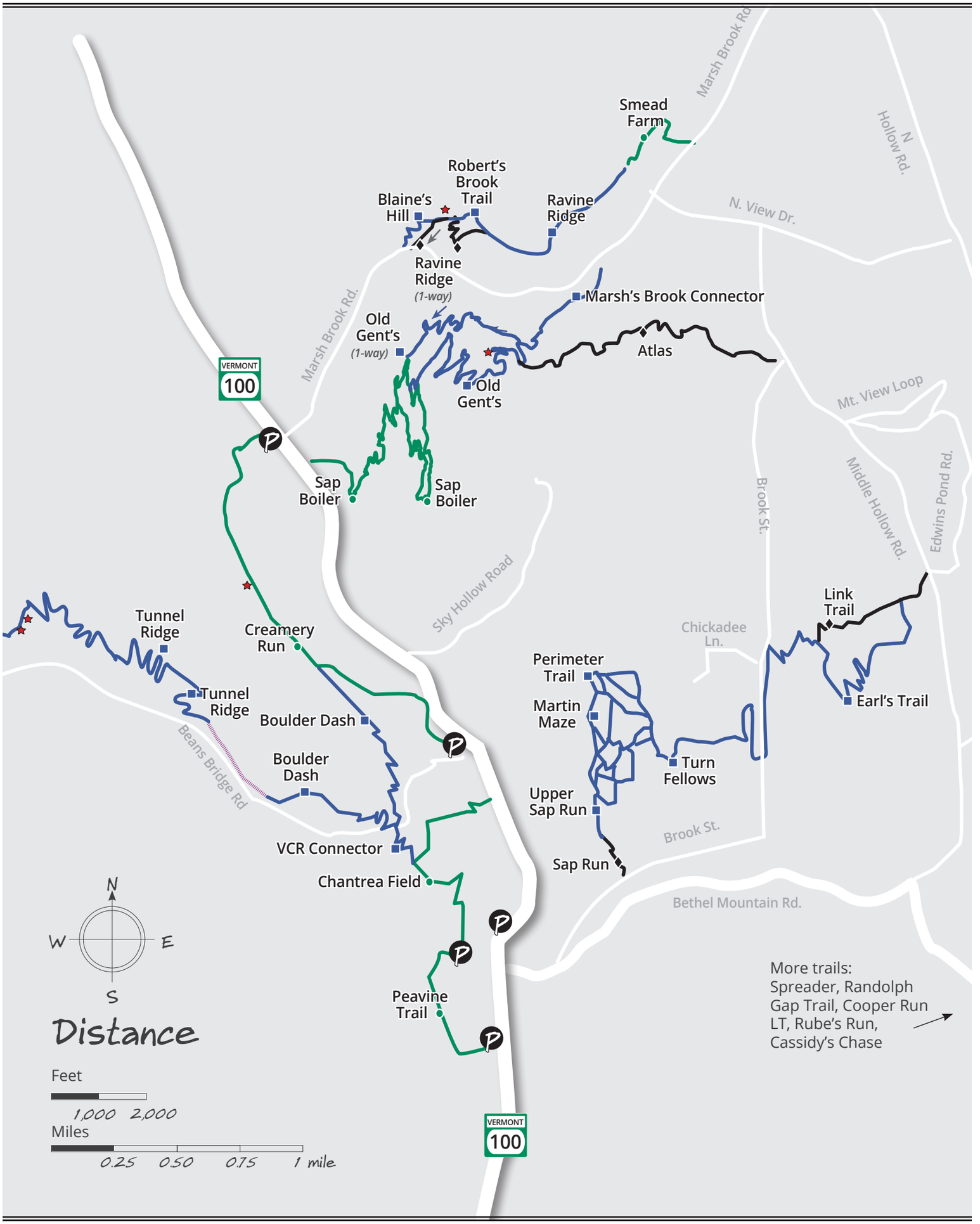
Smead Farm
Marsh Brook Rd
N Hollow Rd.
Robert's Brook Trail
Blaine's Hill
Ravine Ridge
N. View Dr.
Ravine Ridge (1-way)
Marsh's Brook Connector
Old Gent's (1-way)
Atlas
Marsh Brook Rd.
VERMONT 100
Old Gent's
Mt. View Loop
Middle Hollow Rd.
Edwins Pond Rd.
Sap Boiler
Sap Boiler
Brook St.
Sky Hollow Road
Link Trail
Tunnel Ridge
Creamery Run
Chickadee Ln.
Perimeter Trail
Tunnel Ridge
Martin Maze
Earl's Trail
Boulder Dash
Beans Bridge Rd
Boulder Dash
Turn Fellows
Upper Sap Run
Brook St.
VCR Connector
Sap Run
Chantrea Field
Bethel Mountain Rd.
N
W
E
S
Peavine Trail
More trails:
Spreader, Randolph Gap Trail, Cooper Run LT, Rube's Run, Cassidy's Chase
Distance
Feet
1,000 2,000
Miles
0.25 0.50 0.75 1 mile
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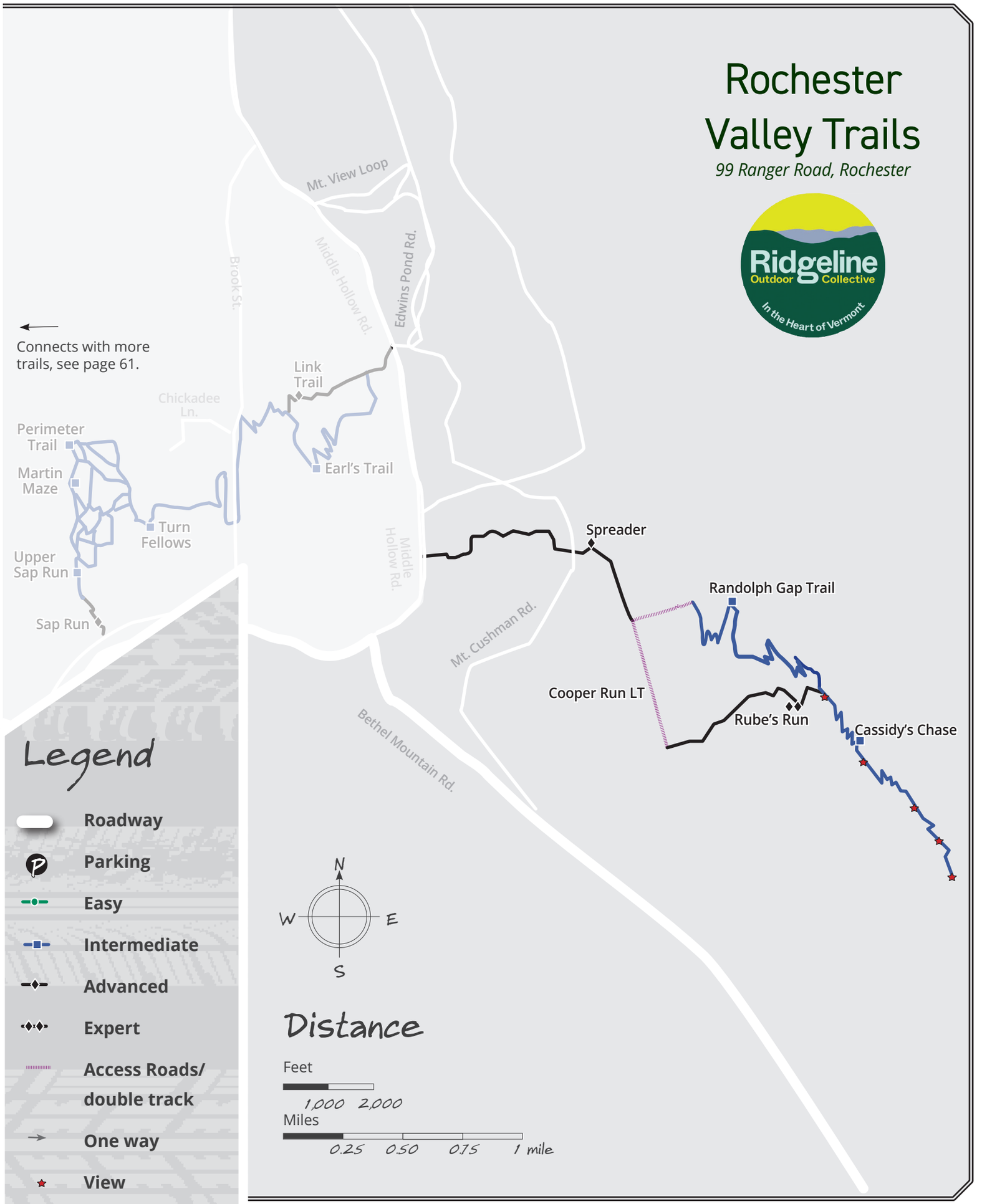
Rochester Valley Trails

99 Ranger Road, Rochester



RIDE: Moosalamoo

Moosalamoo National Recreation Area
A man enjoys biking along side of Silver Lake on the Chandler Ridge trail, known for its classic singletrack.

Moosalamoo National Recreation Area

Mountain biking in the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area (MNRA) is a throwback to what mountain biking was in its initial stages — a unique way to cover distances in the backcountry. With more than 70 miles of trails within the 16,000 acres of the MNRA, trails range from logging roads to groomed and buffed-out singletrack to ungroomed moderate trails that cover 6- to 25-mile loops as well as many point-to-point rides.

Go for an hour up to Silver Lake over moderate terrain, or make it a half day up the challenging terrain of Mount Moosalamoo and the 16-mile Chandler Ridge loop. Stop in at the Blueberry Hill Outdoor Center for maps, snacks and info about year-round recreation. At Moosalamoo Campground there's a pump track for little kids and a mile-groomed track next to the campground for older kids, teens and adults. Don't miss the Voter Brook Overlook!

Moosalamoo
VERMONT

While you're here ...

Visit Texas Falls

Go see this impressive cascading falls down a scenic gorge, small but powerful. There's an easy walking trail, a picnic pavilion and footbridge across the gorge. Texas Falls is off Route 125 out of Hancock. The river drains east into the White River and eventually into the Connecticut River.

Peek inside old Vermont

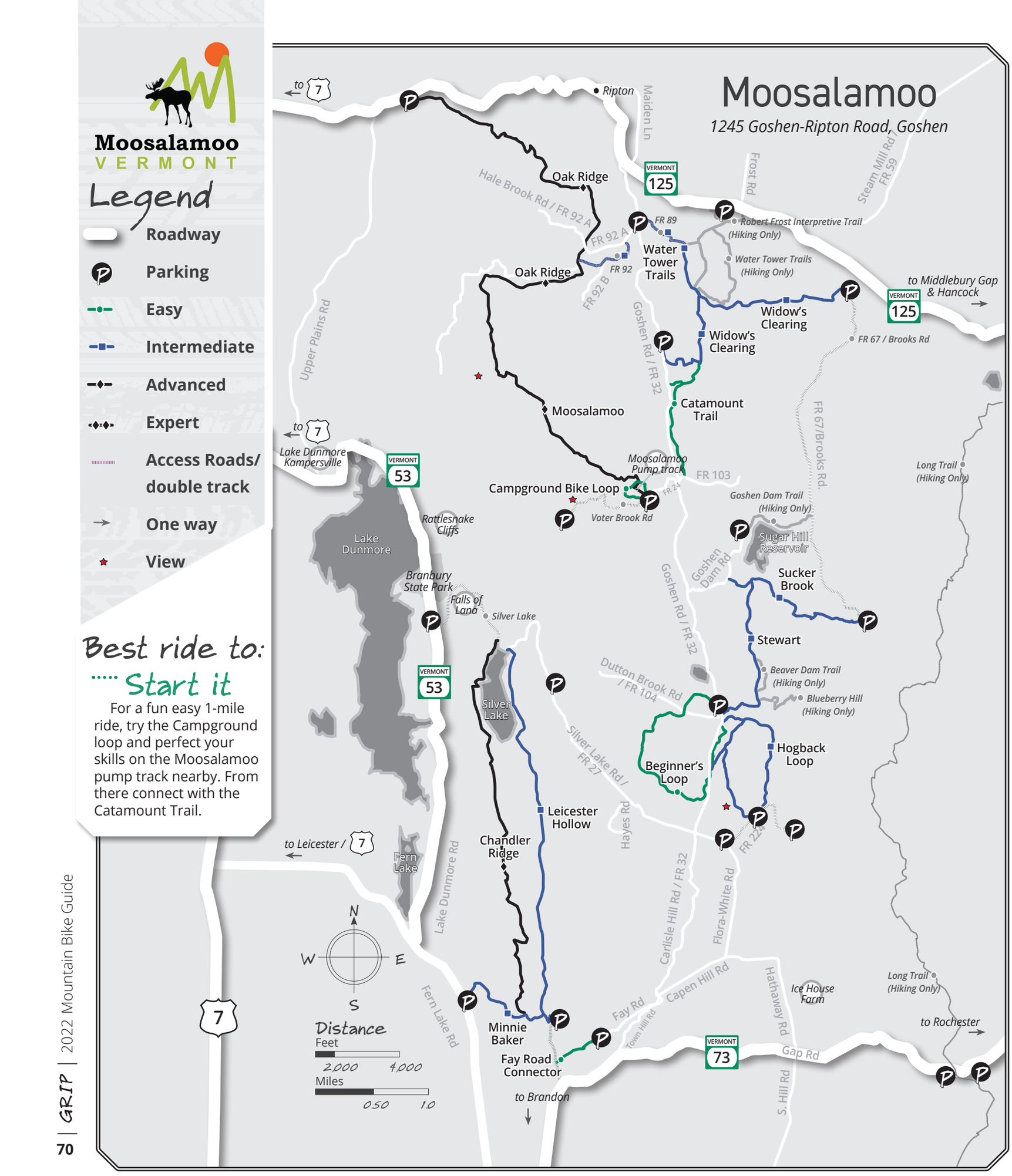
The Ripton Country Store has changed ownership but it's still the quaint old-fashioned establishment we've all known and loved. Yes, it's still a post office. Yes, they still sell penny candy. Yes, you'll still find a random selection as well as the necessities. Enjoy the small town charm of a loved village store.

Enjoy the lakes

What's summer without a day on the beach and swimming in lakes or rivers? Lake Dunmore's Branbury State Park is adjacent to the Moosalamoo trails. The park has a long beach, playground, snackbar, camping sites, picnic tables and grills — what more could you need?

Enjoy poetry from a boardwalk

In nearby Ripton the 1.2-mile Robert Frost Interpretive Trail traverses mountain meadows, pinewoods and the Middlebury River in the national forest. Handicapped accessible, vault toilet. Several of Frost's poems are mounted along the trail in the woods and fields.


Moosalamoo
VERMONT
Legend
Roadway
Parking
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View
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Start it
For a fun easy 1-mile ride, try the Campground loop and perfect your skills on the Moosalamoo pump track nearby. From there connect with the Catamount Trail.
Moosalamoo
1245 Goshen-Ripton Road, Goshen
to 7
Ripton
Maiden Ln
Steam Mill Rd / FR 59
Frost Rd
VERMONT 125
Oak Ridge
Hale Brook Rd / FR 92 A
FR 89
Robert Frost Interpretive Trail (Hiking Only)
Water Tower Trails
Water Tower Trails (Hiking Only)
FR 92 A
FR 92
FR 92 B
Oak Ridge
to Middlebury Gap & Hancock
VERMONT 125
Widow's Clearing
Widow's Clearing
FR 67 / Brooks Rd
Upper Plains Rd
Goshen Rd / FR 32
Moosalamoo
Catamount Trail
to 7
Lake Dunmore Kampersville
VERMONT 53
Moosalamoo Pump track
FR 103
Campground Bike Loop
FR 24
Voter Brook Rd
Goshen Dam Trail (Hiking Only)
FR 67/Brooks Rd.
Long Trail (Hiking Only)
Rattlesnake Cliffs
Lake Dunmore
Sugar Hill Reservoir
Goshen Dam Rd
Sucker Brook
Branbury State Park
Falls of Lana
Silver Lake
Goshen Rd / FR 32
Stewart
VERMONT 53
Dutton Brook Rd / FR 104
Beaver Dam Trail (Hiking Only)
Blueberry Hill (Hiking Only)
Silver Lake
Silver Lake Rd / FR 27
Hogback Loop
Beginner's Loop
Leicester Hollow
Hayes Rd
to Leicester / 7
Chandler Ridge
Fern Lake
Lake Dunmore Rd
FR 22
Carlisle Hill Rd / FR 32
Flora-White Rd
N
W
E
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Distance
Feet
2,000
4,000
Miles
0.50
1.0
7
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Q&A with George Lawrence

Addison County Bike Club

What makes the trails at ACBC unique to the area?

George Lawrence: Addison County Bike Club maintains trails in Middlebury, the Moosalamoo Natural Recreation Area, New Leaf in Bristol, and Vergennes. Each network has a different flavor. Middlebury and Moosalamoo are mostly old school New England singletrack. Vergennes is a compact network with a lot of riding on exposed rock. New Leaf is the most flowy network with berms and jumps. There are also pump tracks in Moosalamoo, New Leaf, and one under construction in Middlebury.

What should first time riders know about these trails before they arrive?

George Lawrence: Most of our riding is on classic New England style twisty singletrack. We do not have a lot of machine made trails. Moosalamoo offers the best backcountry feel, long distances, and views. New Leaf Bristol is the most modern with a mix of machine and hand made trails. Middlebury offers great trails very close to town on Chipman Hill and Battell Woods, which include the Trail Around Middlebury (TAM). We also have groomed winter singletrack fat biking at Rikert Outdoor Center in Ripton, Battell Woods in Middlebury, and New Leaf in Bristol.

What's your favorite trail and why?

George Lawrence: That is like asking about a favorite food. Variety is the spice of life!

Which is best for a beginner? Which would you recommend for an advanced rider who wants a challenge?

George Lawrence: The Trail Around Middlebury (TAM), along with the 1-mile campground trail around the Moosalamoo Campground, are best for beginners. For a challenge, the berms and jumps of New Leaf Bristol are fun. Megawatt and High Power trails in Middlebury are shorter classic rocky, rooty, twisty singletrack trails, and in Moosalamoo the Leicester Hollow/Chandler Ridge loop or the Moosalamoo/Oak Ridge trails are longer classic singletrack, and there is also the 14-mile Moosalamoo Grand Tour.

When did you first get into mountain biking? How did your passion begin?

George Lawrence: As kids, in the pre-mountain bike era, my brother and I shared a BMX bike that we thrashed and crashed on in a gravel pit near our home. A friend got a mountain bike during college in 1987 and I tried it out. I had always been into biking and loved being in the woods so I bought a used Cannondale for $100. It has been great to see the evolution of both bikes and trails. I don't miss toe clips or steep head angles. I do love 29" wheels and 3" tires, fat biking, dropper posts, and front suspension. Mountain biking has been a great way to explore new trails and see new areas while satisfying the need for speed.

Who or what inspires you when you ride?

George Lawrence: I love the challenge of riding smoothly in rough terrain. Mountain biking allows me to live in the moment, in the great outdoors, and not worry about other things.

Do you have a favorite local spot you'd recommend for folks after their ride?

George Lawrence: Two Brothers in Middlebury, Park Squeeze in Vergennes, and The Bobcat in Bristol all have great food and beer.

Is there anything else local riders or visitors should know?

George Lawrence: We have a lot to offer in Addison County: mountains, lakes, rivers, trails, quiet gravel roads for biking, and skiing. Come check it out!

By George Lawrence

A new pump track (left) opened in Middlebury on May 31 at Middlebury's Rec Park. New Leaf bike park in Bristol (right) features flowy trails with berms, jumps.

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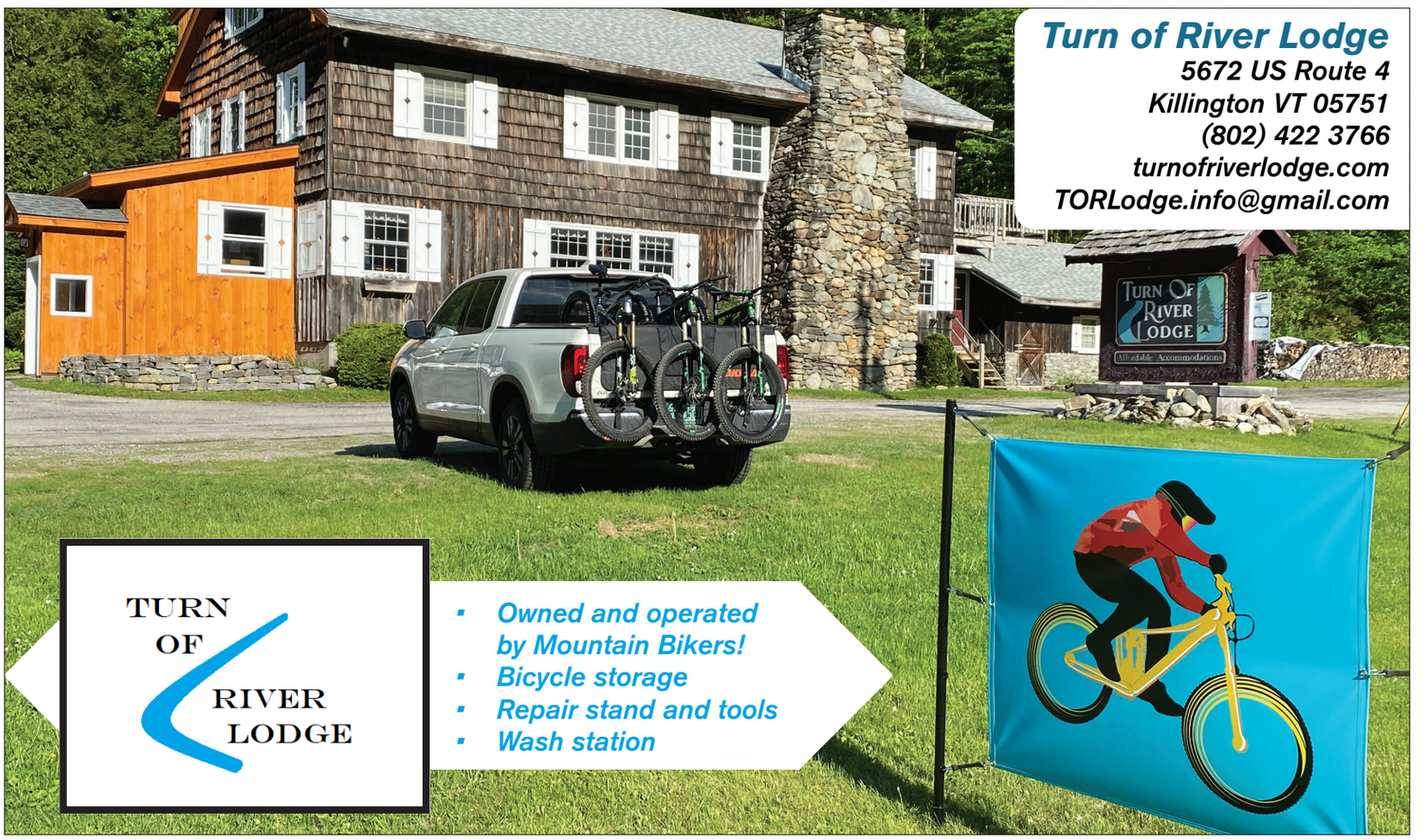

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RIDE: Pittsford & Brandon

Pittsford Town Trails

These multiuse trails provide recreational experiences for residents and visitors alike through all four seasons. Trails are well-marked and traverse open fields, meander along rivers and waterfalls, and through woodlands. This trail network has been developed and maintained by volunteers with support from Pittsford Town, private landowners, and grant funding from the state. When the ground is soft and wet, the town asks mountain bikers not to ride as ruts and holes contribute to trail damage. The trails are open to all non-motorized uses and are free and open to the public. For more information visit trails.pittsfordvermont.com.

Hawk Hill Trails

This 3-mile network is located behind Otter Valley Union High School, 3.1 miles south of Brandon, on Route 7 (Franklin Street). Trail access is in the southwest corner of the football field directly behind the school. A large kiosk across the athletic fields marks the trailhead.

The trails form a series of interconnected loops marked with white and blue blazes. The multiuse trails are open to all non-motorized uses and are free and open to the public. For more information visit townofbrandon.com/hawk-hill-trail-map.

While you're here ...

Stroll downtown

Brandon's downtown recently got a facelift with the reconstruction of Route 7. New sidewalks, benches, flowers and trees now grace every corner and invite you to stroll. The art galleries, shops, bakery and restaurants offer unique Vermont-made treats and crafts to explore and discover. There is also a park with a fountain in the middle of town, when you need a rest.

Summer sips

Brandon is Rutland County's northernmost town. It features two microbreweries and a winery in town. It's a great place to discover a new thirst-quenching beverage this summer. Red Clover Ale Company, Foley Brothers Brewing and the Neshobe River Winery all call Brandon home. Schedule a tasting or try one of these local favorites at a downtown restaurant and enjoy the newly renovated town center.

Music on the Farm

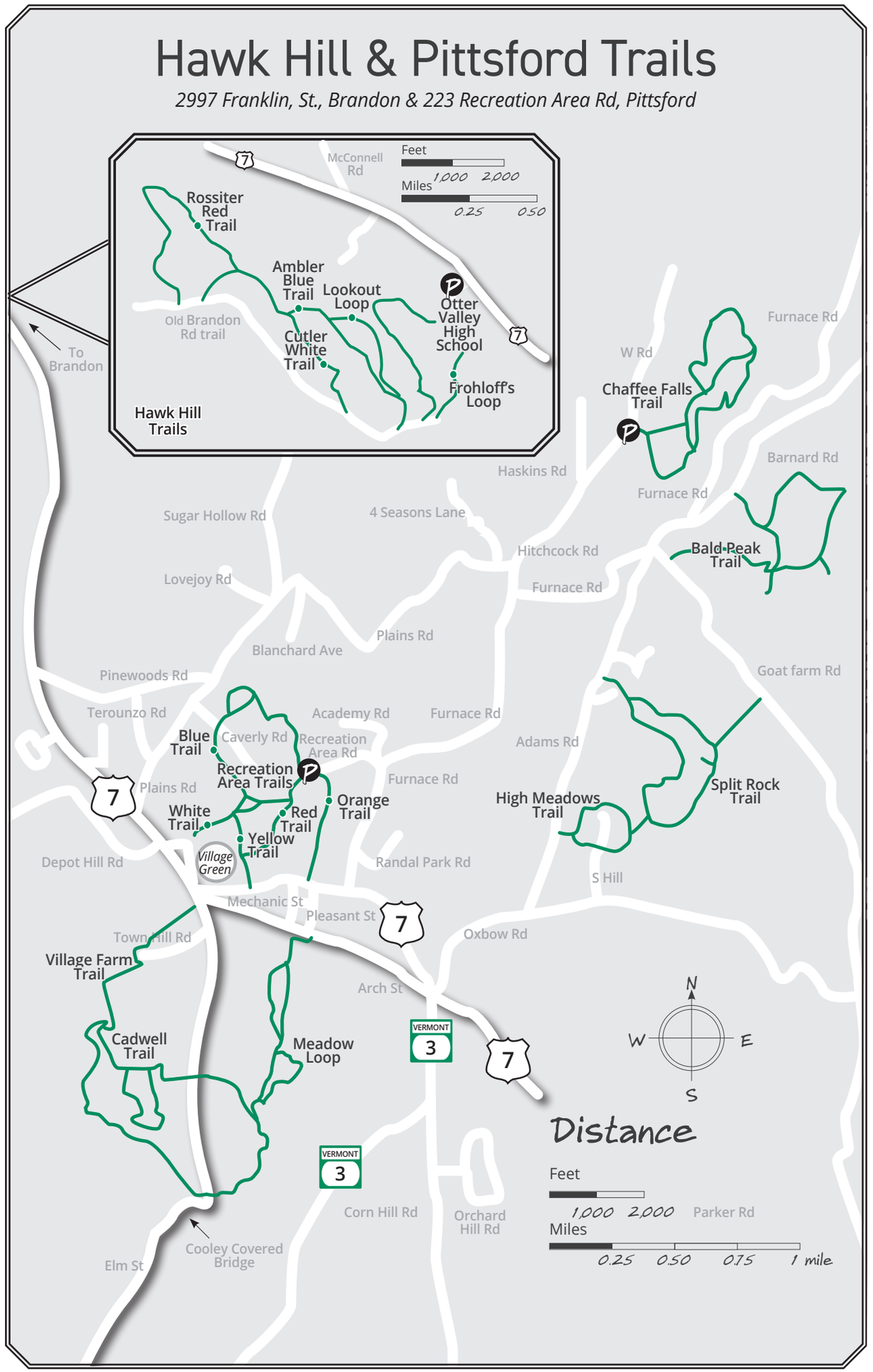
Pittsford Village Farm's "Tunesdays series" presents nine outdoor concerts throughout the summer season: Tuesdays, June 20-Aug. 15 from 6-8 p.m. The events are free and open to the public. Food truck will be on site. Lothrop Elementary School Gym is the rain location.

Visit alpacas

Maple View Alpaca Farm is just 2.5 miles north of Brandon. The farm is open to visit and learn about these gentle, intelligent creatures. The farm store features products made from luxurious alpaca fiber, too!

Hawk Hill & Pittsford Trails

2997 Franklin, St., Brandon & 223 Recreation Area Rd, Pittsford



Best ride to:

····· Start it

For a nice easy loop head to the Pittsford Recreation Area Trails. Take the Orange trail which follows sections of Sugar Hollow Brook to the Blue trail (0.65 miles). To add a bit, branch off to the White, then to the Yellow then Red trails, which adds about ½ mile.
Red Trail – 0.3 miles
Orange Trail – 0.52 miles
Yellow Trail – 0.25 miles
Blue Trail – 0.65 miles
White Trail – 0.3 miles

= Feel it

Ride the Village Farm Trail to the Cadwell Trail and Meadow loop then back on Arch Street. There's a trailhead on the south side of Arch Street with parking to the west of the fire house. The Cadwell Trail (2.4 miles) has entrances off Elm Street, too for a shorter ride. The main trailhead is at the Recreation Area Trails but parking is also available 0.6 miles south of Route 7 or 0.4 miles further on Elm Street at the Cooley Covered Bridge.

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RIDE: Ludlow

Okemo

A family prepares to board a lift at Okemo. The progression park is a great place to learn new skills and tricks.

Evolution Bike Park at Okemo

Okemo's bike park will operate again in a limited capacity this summer, only from the Sugarhouse Lodge across from the Sunburst Six lift serving the lower mountain via the South Ridge Quad A lift. Due to ongoing lift improvement projects, the summit trails Scrambler (blue) and Shake and Bake (black) will not be open. There will be no lift service for mountain bikes to the summit where this more challenging terrain is located. The resort has not provided an estimate when this area will be reopened.

Okemo's bike park debuted in 2015 with the trails off Quad A; it opened the summit for intermediate and expert riders in 2017. Trail access requires riders to purchase a pass. Visit: okemo.com.

While you're here ...

Take a hike

If you're looking for a mountain to climb (on foot this time) check out the Healdville Trail, a 5.9 mile hike to Okemo Mountain's 3,340-foot summit. At the top there's a fire tower and several lookouts with stunning views.

Challenge yourself

The Haulback Challenge Course at Okemo features three different courses of varying levels of difficulty. The course is made up of 25 elements that challenge balance and strength on an aerial journey from one tree to another! This is a self directed course where you hook up to a SafeRoller and maneuver along a continuous belay system through trees and over streams. Limited to participants 50-250 pounds.

Okemo

Swim in cascading waterfalls

Buttermilk Falls features a series of three main waterfalls on Branch Brook — lower falls is 8 feet; middle falls is 20 feet; upper falls is 15 feet. All have excellent pools to swim in and depending on the flow, it's possible to swim under the falls! Park at the end of Buttermilk Falls Rd off Route 103 in Ludlow.

By Polly Mikula

Ludlow nonprofit hopes to build extensive bike trails on 300 acres

Three trail areas in town under construction

By Katy Savage

After 20 years of planning Ludlow Area Trails Association (LAST) is slated to open its first mountain bike trail — a 1,700 foot loop — behind the former high school on Father's Day weekend.

"For 20 plus years, there's been people trying to get bike stuff to happen in town and for us to get it started last summer — to actually see it come to fruition — has been a huge relief," said Charlie Rimer, the president of LAST.

The nonprofit bike association was gifted the land behind the former Black River High School, dubbed the "Back 40," for free, to build mountain bike trails. It will feature 10-15 trails within the next three years.

But, the Back 40 is just one of the trail areas mountain bike enthusiasts envision for Ludlow.

> LAST members submitted an Act 250 permit to make Fletcher Farm the size of Pine Hill Park in Rutland within the next five years.

About 300 acres of land owned by Fletcher Farm School on Route 103 in Ludlow will soon be under construction, too. LAST members submitted an Act 250 permit to make Fletcher Farm the size of Pine Hill Park in Rutland within the next five years. They hope to open five or six trails at Fletcher Farm this summer.

A third piece of land soon to be under trail construction surrounds Fox Run Golf Club. Golf course owner, Troy Caruso, who owns several real estate properties in town, is giving LAST about 50 acres of land for trail building. LAST members hope to build 10-15 family-friendly trails and an adaptive trail at the golf course — some of which will be open this August.

"Our goal is to have something in each spot," said Rimer, the president of LAST.

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- Parking
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- Expert
- Access Roads/ double track
- One way
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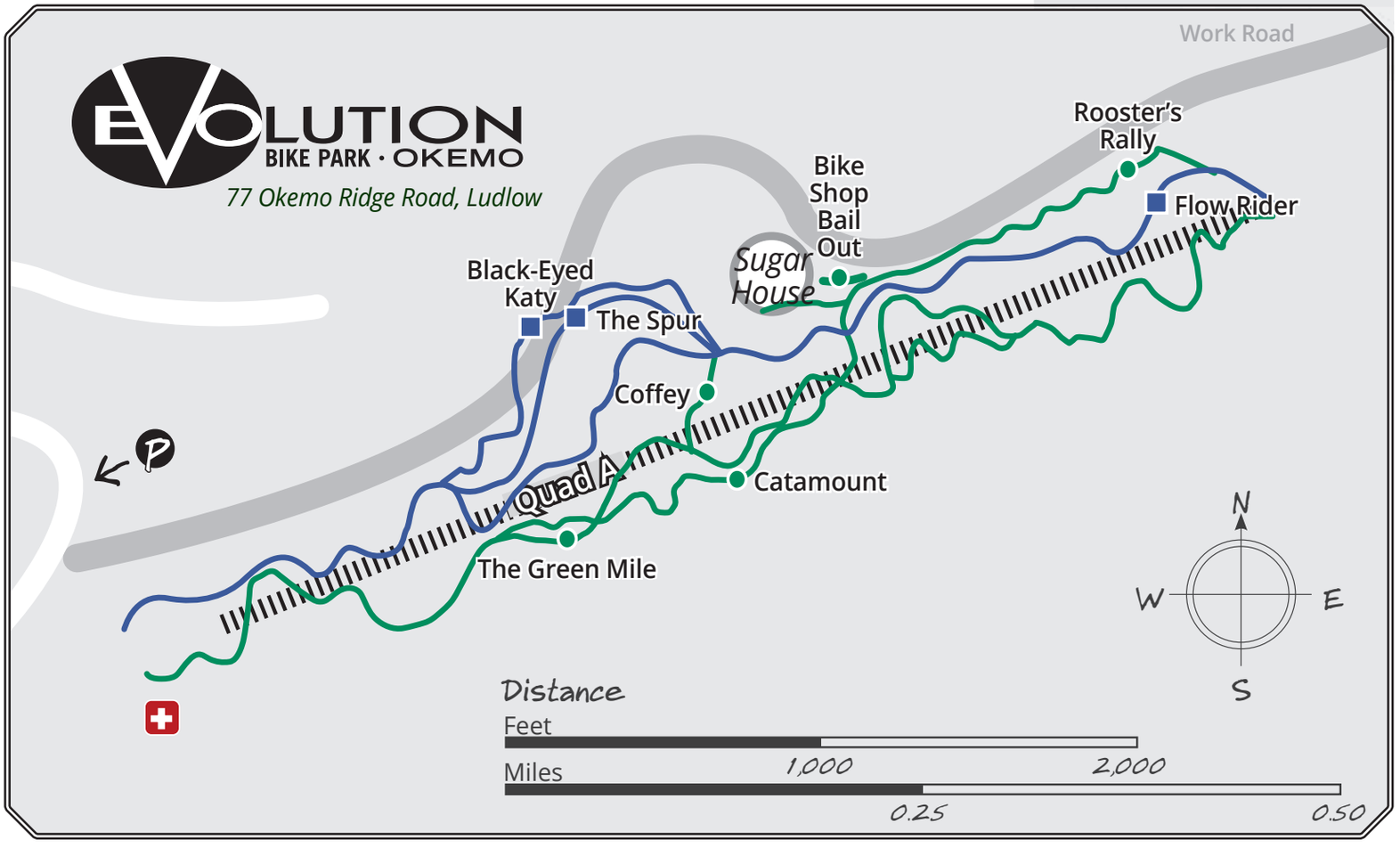

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Colorado native finds housing in Vermont through mtb community

By Victoria Gaither

When mountain bike rider Austin Osborne, and his wife Jackie, had an opportunity to leave Colorado for the Green Mountain State, shifting gears to get the best start wasn't easy.

The biggest obstacle was housing.

"We didn't realize that housing has become cutthroat and nearly impossible to find on short notice," explained Austin.

Submitted

Austin Osborne (above) moved to Wallingford from Colorado and is excited to be part of the local mountain biking scene across central Vt.

Jackie accepted a job at Spring Lake Ranch in Shrewsbury, and before they knew it, the two were shopping for housing in Rutland County, but Austin was coming up short.

Getting desperate in Colorado, he decided to think outside the box, and "I messaged the administrator of the MTB Vermont Instagram Page who told me to post on the Vermont Mountain Biking Facebook group.

Not long after that post, Austin was contacted by another mountain bike rider who said his mother had an open unit on her property that the family used but was vacant.

A few phone calls later, Austin and his wife were leaving Colorado for a new home in Wallingford.

His story is just one example of how MTB Vermont and mountain bikers look out for each other.

"Outside of finding housing, the MTB or the cycling community in general has this way of pulling you in and letting you know that someone is looking out for you and that strangers will go out of their way to help you," he said.

Avid mountain bike rider and wildlife photographer Steve Costello, who also aided in helping Austin, said Rutland County has so much to offer people.

He pointed to the Rutland Red Carpet Program, which treats prospective new residents like a best friend, showing them around and connecting them to businesses and communities of like interests. In Austin's case, it was housing and a new mountain biking family.

This experience has made Austin believe that humanity is strong and willing to help, especially in Rutland County.

By Victoria Gaither

Avid mountain biker Austin Osborne (above) and his wife Jackie recently moved to Wallingford from Colorado after securing housing through a social media post to the local mountain bike community.

> "What I got from the whole ordeal was that there is still humanity for strangers," Osborne said.

"What I got from the whole ordeal was that there is still humanity for strangers; at many times, I could have just been cast aside, and no one had any obligation to help me and my wife move across the country," he explained.

But in true Rutland County fashion, they didn't put the brakes on his dream of moving and riding the trails of the Green Mountain State.

So far, his favorite is the nearby Slate Valley Trails.

As Austin puts it, the feeling of climbing up the trails and then flying down is a thrill that brings freedom to his soul.

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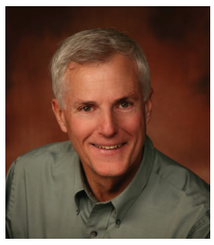

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Discover
the Killington Community

By Erica Canada

The Town helped to secure a $75,000 grant from the state and pledged $25,000 more to help build the newest trail in town, the Sherburner, which opened June 3.

The symbiotic relationship between private investment and public infrastructure can be a difficult balancing act. The Town of Killington has helped to build partnerships that will catapult the community beyond what either entity could have accomplished alone.

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Killington Forward

The Town of Killington has received VEPC approval for a master TIF District, has signed a development agreement with Great Gulf (developer of Six Peaks Killington at the Snowshed/Ramshead base) and received VEPC approval for it's first phased filing. The town is now preparing for a bond vote March 7.

Workforce and Affordable Housing

The Town is actively pursuing plans to bring both affordable and workforce housing to the community.

Municipal Water System

Clean, reliable water is a key piece to development. The Town of Killington has plans for a municipal water system that would service Killington Road development and the future Killington Village at the resort.

Killington Road Master Plan

Killington plans to rebuild 4 miles of its main road that links visitors to businesses and the resort. Plans call for increased safety and accessibility, which are critical for new development. New bus pull-offs, sidewalks, and bike paths will help make the area fit for multi-modal transportation.

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