

# Membership, Fundraising, Events, and Partnership Opportunities for the Mad River Path Association

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## Final Report



A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT BETWEEN:  
THE MAD RIVER PATH ASSOCIATION  
AND  
THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND APPLIED ECONOMICS  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

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*Mad River Path*



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The past four months have been an amazing learning experience for the students involved in working alongside the mad river path association. We appreciate how welcoming and supportive you have all been throughout this service learning experience, and wish to thank those of you who worked with us during this endeavor.

Upon meeting on September 16<sup>th</sup>, we were excited, curious, and a bit overwhelmed by the concept of working with this unknown Path Association with the goal of giving some sort of recommendation as a deliverable in December. In that first meeting, we made our acquaintances with Laura Brines, Mad River Path Association President, Bobbi Rood, MRPA Secretary, Laura A, grant writer, and Fred Dilbert and Kevin Russell, affiliates of the Path.

Without the support of these committed individuals, we would not have been able to successfully implement a strategic plan of action and focus on feasible deliverables for the MRPA. We offer a special thanks to all of you and wish you the best in your future path endeavors.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This collaborative project between the Mad River Path Association and the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics at the University of Vermont was developed by Joshua Schwartz of the Mad River Valley Planning District and Will Sawyer from the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont. The product of many discussions between the Mad River Valley community and UVM was the formation of a service-learning course entitled Local Community Initiatives. This course was designed to provide community-based organizations in the Mad River Valley with additional resources as they continue their initiatives by working with student groups as well as to enhance student learning by bringing the classroom outside into our Vermont communities.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Throughout the course of this project, our group has aimed to collaboratively create recommendations that will further the success of the Mad River Path Association. We hoped to partner with members of the MRPA to gain an understanding of how their organization functions and identify areas that can be improved. Our research on similar organizations will allow us to identify alternative tools and opportunities that the MRPA can learn from and potentially adopt into their own association. The combination of our partnership and research will generate both specific and more general recommendations focused on increasing membership, partnership and event opportunities, and funding for the MRPA.

## **METHODS**

Informal meetings and semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of the Mad River Path Association Board to gain a better understanding of the organization, its members, priorities and function. Interviews were conducted either in person or over the phone and with the President, Treasurer, Secretary and Grant Writer.

Path or trail organizations of varying sizes managing hiking, biking, or multi-use recreation paths in the state of Vermont the United States and Canada were researched. A wide variety of organizations were studied to provide insight from several experiences with non-profit membership, fundraising, event, and community partnerships. Some of the organizations studied were comparable to the size of the MRPA, others much larger. Some paths spanned a few miles in one town whereas others cut across several towns and state lines. Ownership varied as some paths were state funded and others patched together from individual land owners. The intent of choosing such a variety was to learn from organizations similar to the MRPA as well as from organizations that are quite different. Semi-structured and informal interviews were conducted with members of the

various boards over the telephone. Additional information was gathered from online resources.

Suggestions were drawn from the experiences of other path organizations. To the extent possible, suggestions were tied to resources known to be available in the Mad River Valley.

## **CASE STUDY SUMMARIES**

### ***HUDSON VALLEY RAIL TRAIL***

#### *Introduction*

The Hudson Valley Rail Trail is a 2.37 mile public recreation path in Highland, New York which is owned and managed by Hudson Valley Rail Trail, Inc. Activities permitted on the trail include walking, horseback riding, bicycling, inline skating, and mountain biking. The path is also wheelchair accessible. The surface of the path consists of asphalt and crushed stone, and mowing services are volunteered along the path.

#### *History of Development*

The trail was partly developed from funds from the Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson Valley. The town of Lloyd was deeded sections of the land. In the 1990's with an effort to lay fiber optic cable, fiber optic company purchased an easement from the town for the portion of land where the railroad tracks had formerly lay. From this transaction, the town received \$400,000 for the easement. Money from this easement allowed for the construction of the trail. Neighboring towns of Marlboro and Milton, NY are trying to build and connect paths to the Hudson Valley Rail Trail.

#### *Membership*

Applications for membership are located in each issue of the Hudson Valley Rail Trail newsletter. Newsletters are distributed on a seasonal basis, usually 2-3 times each year. Individuals may also enroll for membership by printing out their membership form available online. To encourage new people to sign up for membership, a membership table is set up at each of the events hosted by the Hudson Valley Rail Trail. On average they are able to enroll ten new members at each event held. For their membership donation, members of the Hudson Valley Rail Trail, receive a reduced price entry to all HVRT sponsored events. HVRT does not hold an annual membership drive but rather has rolling membership. They find that members do not typically remember when their membership year expires, so they mail out membership renewal notices the month membership is about to expire. The organization finds they are able to renew a significant portion of their memberships each year by sending out these renewal notices.

In October 2009, it was approximated that there are 140 members HVRT members. Membership rates are as follows:

\$15- Individual  
\$20- Family  
\$50-99- Patron  
\$100-499- Supporting  
\$500- Benefactor

On their application form they also inquire about volunteer assistance in the following areas.

-Trail Maintenance  
-Fund Raising  
-Newsletter  
-Ecology Project  
-Special Events  
-Refreshments  
-Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Programs & Events*

The Hudson Valley Rail Trail usually hosts four annual events with the proceeds from admission charges to benefit the trail. Proceeds are used by the organization for trail maintenance, improvements, expansions, matching funds, publicity and events. All the events hosted are held *on* the Rail Trail. They hold events on the trail to showcase the trail and show people how great the path is. This both encourages path use as well as encourages people to enroll as members. In the past they have experienced extremely cold temperatures at the Winter Fest and rain during the Harvest Moon Walk. Events are held rain or shine and people are encouraged to dress appropriately for the weather. Events held do not involve a lot of technology and sound equipment so weather has been less of a concern.

A brief description of the events offered in 2007 is provided below

#### **Winter Fest**

Attendance 800 achieved despite freezing weather.

Event highlights include,

-horse drawn wagon rides  
-roasted chestnuts  
-ice carving  
-chili fest competition (chili donated by local restaurants)  
-businesses contributed door prizes  
-they permitted the Rotary Club to hold a Rotary fundraiser at the event (selling hot dogs and hot chocolate) and in exchange, the Rotary members provided their service volunteering to serve chili.

### **Breakfast on the Trail**

Complementary breakfast offered on the trail. (Weekend in June)  
Breakfast coincides with the organization's annual membership meeting  
Hold elections for board members  
Discuss Rail Trail issues  
Sometimes they have music at the event  
Food items are donated by Hannaford grocery

### **Harvest Moon Walk**

September 28<sup>th</sup>  
Registration fees:  
\$5- age 6-65  
\$4- seniors  
\$20- family of four  
Includes glow stick, cider, donuts, popcorn, music.  
People encouraged to bring lawn chairs to socialize with their neighbors.  
Pets and bikes not permitted  
Kids pumpkin decorating contest also held.

### **Artists on the Trail**

Artist leads students and adults for 2 hours to draw/paint on the trail.  
Held an exhibit of artwork in Town Hall.

### *Solicitation of Local Businesses*

The Annual Spike Program- is a “way for local businesses and individuals to lend their support to the Hudson Valley Rail Trail on a yearly basis with one donation instead of repeated requests for assistance.” Businesses/individuals have the option of pledging at two different levels of support.

Hudson Valley Rail Trail has found this to be an effective way to build relations with area businesses. When they initially started the Annual Spike Program they specifically targeted banks and health service professionals. They focused on banks because they learned that banks are required to give a certain amount to support local efforts each year. They focused on professionals such as doctors, dentists and chiropractors because they framed the trail as crucial to maintaining good health.

Gold Level--\$300.

- Featured *top* listing at all events and publicity—Newspaper, Radio, Television, & Posters.
- 6 passes to all Hudson Valley Rail Trail sponsored events
- Recognition at HVRT annual meeting
- Link to website
- Framed certificate

#### Silver Level--\$200

- Featured *prominent* listing at all events and publicity—Newspaper, Radio, Television, & Posters.
- 3 passes to all Hudson Valley Rail Trail sponsored events
- Recognition at HVRT annual meeting
- Link to website
- Framed certificate

#### *Partnerships and Funding*

Partnered with a local artist who created a print of prominent bridge crossing on the trail. The artist sells copies of her print with a significant portion of the profits benefitting the Hudson Valley Rail Trail. In turn the HVRT provides advertising for her print. This is another source of income for the non-profit.

Worked with the Town of Lloyd to apply for a grant from the New York State Department of Transportation Enhancement Program.

Partnered with the Ulster County Municipal Planning Organization (MPO) to apply for a grant from the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The local Rotary Club has also provided support over the years with various projects such as a fitness park, a garden project, and a rail trail depot.

#### *Contact Information*

Address: 12 Church Street Highland, NY 12528  
Phone: (845) 691-8151  
Website: <http://www.hudsonvalleyrailtrail.com/>  
Email: [info@hudsonvalleyrailtrail.com](mailto:info@hudsonvalleyrailtrail.com)

### ***MISSISQUOI VALLEY RAIL TRAIL***

#### *Introduction*

The Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail runs through eight towns in the northwest corner of the state of Vermont including St. Albans, Swanton, Fairfield, Sheldon, Enosburg Falls, Enosburg, Berkshire, Richford. The trail surface is both limestone and asphalt depending on the section. Overall the path is ten feet wide and 26.4 miles in length. There are several town road and agricultural crossings and activities permitted on the trail include walking, skiing, biking, and horseback riding. No motorized vehicles are permitted except snowmobiles, motorized wheelchairs, and maintenance vehicles.



### *History of Development*

The Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail is owned by the State of Vermont and maintained by the Department of Forestry, Parks, & Recreation, The Vermont Agency of Transportation & volunteers. The Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council is a non-profit organization that represents the trail and provides local assistance.

The role of the Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council is to maintain the trail and organize volunteer efforts. The Council provides a voice to local residents giving them the opportunity to work toward their goals and ensure path users have a positive experience. They work towards obtaining state funds for long-term path maintenance and the preservation of this community resource.

#### Recent Accomplishments of the Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council:

- Installation of picnic tables and benches
- Earmarked VTrans funds for trail upkeep
- Held celebration events for National Trails Day
- Quadricentennial Celebration Events—guided outings
- Photo Contest

#### Prospective Projects:

- Negotiate payment and seeks funds to connect restrooms along path to local water and sewage systems
- Investigate and purchase storage facilities for rickshaw and coordinate volunteer efforts to provide rides on the trail to elderly and persons with disabilities.

Membership with the Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council is voluntary and follows a loose and very casual system. To enroll new members, the Council sends membership brochures to individuals who provide their contact information in sign in boxes located along the trail. The membership rates were established 10-15 years ago and have not been increased as the membership charge continues to be \$15 per individual and \$35 per family.

#### **Benefits of working with Regional Planning Commission**

- Obtain state funding from Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) for large repairs and trail maintenance
- Planning Commission deals with finances and state funds administered by VTrans
- Funding pays for personnel, postage, and newsletter costs
- Collaborate and coordinate advertising efforts on a regional scale
- The Regional Planning Commission helps unite efforts of multiple towns through which the trail runs

- Encouraged formation of Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council about ten years ago
- Creation of maps for the trail

The Regional Planning Commission works on large scale maintenance tasks such as the construction of parking areas. The Planning Commission has been working on a parking lot construction project which involves obtaining proper permitting and establishing three parking areas along the trail on state-owned property. Several challenges have been faced prohibiting the completion of this initiative. First, this project has not had a very high priority given other state needs for highway funds. Soil testing at the location of the perspective parking lot area in Berkshire found pot ash contamination. The cost of cleaning the soil has stalled progress in lot construction.

A Map Guide was funded by member municipalities of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission with grants from the Vermont Agency of Transportation and Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, & Recreation.

### **Photo Contest**

Community members are encouraged to submit photos they have taken of the path, or photos of scenes from the path, or of people active on the path. Photos for the contest are submitted with an entry form stating the location from which the picture was taken. This activity encourages community involvement, increases awareness of the path and its health benefit as well as provides images (with permission) for promotion and marketing purposes. Photos collected are used on printed and online as marketing tools. Recently, the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail Council has coordinated with a marketing firm advertising for the Northwestern Vermont Medical Center.

### **Annual Celebration for National Trails Day**

No admission is charged for events since the council has virtually no expenses and do not conduct fundraising activities. The National Trails Day Celebration includes a community potluck in the center of Enosberg. Council members also host events held on the rail trail including bicycle and running events varying in distance. A guest photographer is invited and brochures are distributed. Advertising for this and other events were included in the Burlington Free Press, the Northwest Vermont Regional Planning Commission newsletter, as well as the Council's mailing list.

## ***MAINE ISLAND TRAIL ASSOCIATION***

### *Introduction*

Formed in 1988 as a partnership between the Island Institute and the Maine Bureau of Public Lands, the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) is America's first water trail; of which has been created, protected, and enjoyed by people who appreciate and support the

coast of Maine. The Maine Island Trail is a 375-mile waterway extending from the New Hampshire boarder on the west, to Machias Bay on the east. The Trail winds its way along the coast, around magnificent and exposed capes, through protected saltwater rivers and quiet bays, and among islands large and small. It includes over 180 islands and mainland sites along the route, available for day visits or overnight camping. MITA has public and private sites, accompanied with conservation partners that encourage other non-profits in the area to partner with the association.

*“MITA was founded on the belief that recreational visitors can and should serve as stewards of Maine's wild islands. From its inception, MITA has fostered a community of volunteer boaters and island users who monitor conditions on the Trail, participate in island clean-ups and other work projects, track recreational use of Trail properties, and spread the word about environment-friendly low-impact practices.”*

### *Membership*

Memberships are based on the calendar year and expire on 12/31. Memberships purchased after Labor Day include the following calendar year.

Upon joining MITA, you receive:

- **The Annual Guide to the Maine Island Trail** – a 250-page guide to the 150+ island sites on the trail, where they are located, and how to use them. The guide also provides important information on the safe and responsible use of the trail generally.
- **Newsletter** – a content-rich semi-annual publication of stories and announcements concerning the Trail and the coast of Maine.
- **Electronic newsletter** - a periodic bulletin concerning upcoming events and announcements
- **Member Discounts** – MITA members receive a package of discounts from local retailers and outfitters including LL Bean and Kittery Trading Post. For members making significant gear purchases, or planning a trip on the coast, the value of the starter kit can easily exceed the cost of MITA membership.
- **Programs and events** – MITA holds events and sponsors outings each year and is working to develop more in the future.
- A portion of your membership dues supports their stewardship work.

### *Programs and Events*

The events and programs that MITA sponsors include a large array of social, volunteer, and trail-oriented gatherings. They range from the LL Bean Springfest, which usually marks the beginning of the season, to the weekly kayak lessons that are offered to the community. MITA takes full advantage of the natural capital that surrounds them and incorporates the social benefit of being involved.

### *Partnerships and Funding*

Conservation partnership is a large priority for the Maine Island Trail Association. These collaborations with other local non-profits ensure the continuity of MITA through creating a necessary and sustainable relationship with like-minded organizations. Some of these partners include:

Appalachian Mountain Club  
Chewonki Foundation  
Damariscotta River Association  
Friends of Perkins Island Lighthouse  
Island Heritage Trust  
Kennebunkport Conservation Trust  
Maine Audubon  
Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands  
Maine Coast Heritage Trust

Nature Trust of New Brunswick  
Nature Conservancy  
Oceanside Conservation Trust  
Outward Bound Wilderness  
Pemaquid Watershed Association  
Portland Trails  
Rippleeffect  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### ***KINGDOM TRAILS ASSOCIATION***

#### *Introduction*

Kingdom Trails Association was established in 1994 by a group of visionary residents and business leaders in the area. Their goal is to encourage recreational use of the Northeast Kingdom that is ecologically sensitive and promotes the natural beauty of the region.

The mission statement reads:

*“To provide recreation and education opportunities for local residents and visitors while working to conserve natural resources and create economic stimulation.”*

Kingdom Trails Association is a local chapter of [tripsforkids.org](http://tripsforkids.org), a national organization that encourages localized non-profit organizations to focus their natural capital towards recreational activities specifically for children.

#### *Membership*

The membership program that Kingdom Trails utilizes is divided by seasonality of the trails and focuses on the differing recreational activities that occur in the Northeast Corridor of Vermont during those seasons.

*“We have two membership seasons: The **"Green Season"** starts in May to the end of October and the **"White Season"** starts in December through the end of March. Or you*

*can join us "Year Round" at a discounted rate to bike, run, hike, ride, cross-country ski or snowshoe."*

Those memberships are then sub-divided even further into Individual Memberships, Family Memberships, and Sponsor/Benefactor Memberships. Upon becoming a member, you receive a trail map outlining the trails for the particular season that your membership entails.

Kingdom Trails Association has a very strong sense of community with the locals. From the months of June to October, there are Volunteer Trail Work days the first Sunday of every month. These usually have a great turn-out and encourage the locals to acknowledge themselves as stakeholders in the Trail Association.

#### *Contact Information*

Address: P.O. Box 274 East Burke, Vermont 05832

Phone: 802-626-0737

Website: <http://www.kingdomtrail.com>

E-mail: [info@kingdomtrail.com](mailto:info@kingdomtrail.com)

### ***TRADING PATH ASSOCIATION***

#### *Introduction*

The Trading Path is a corridor of river crossings linked by roads and trails between the Chesapeake Bay region and the Catawba, Cherokee, and other Indian towns in the Carolinas and Georgia. The Trading Path Association (TPA) is a non-profit organization that aims to preserve, study and promote the remains of this historic path. The goals of the TPA are outlined below:

- Concentrate information and expertise sufficient to facilitate Trading Path related towns and counties in protecting and developing their Trading Path heritage assets.
- Promote and support the study of the Trading Path and related subjects.
- Integrate local Trading Path preservation initiatives in a linked matrix of heritage sites suitable for adoption by the National Park Service as a non-contiguous National Park, Historic Transportation Corridor, Heritage Corridor, Heritage Trail or a Heritage Area.

The action steps the TPA uses to support these goals are below:

- Create a concentration of information and expertise bearing on the Trading Path
- Produce and maintain a comprehensive list of Trading Path river fords and their related community and county leadership cadres
- Locate and index maps and historical records bearing on the Trading Path
- Produce and maintain a comprehensive index of secondary literature

- Create and maintain a database of conservation, preservation and other scientific, governmental, non-profit and commercial services supportive of communities in the Trading Path attempting to realize the value of their heritage sites
- Sponsor internships in and fund research into the history, geography, ethnography and archeology of the Trading Path
- Speak-out about preservation in the Piedmont in general and Trading Path Preservation wherever three or more shall be gathered.

### *History of Development*

- Started in January of 1999
- Acquired a Board of Directors in 2002
- Since 2002 the TPA has actively pursued research contracts, experimented with various publicity materials and public outreach programs, aggressively recruited volunteers, and engaged in preservation at numerous historically and archaeologically important sites along the Trading Path. They have mapped trading Path remnants from Petersburg, VA, across NC, and into SC, and now they are campaigning to preserve these artifacts.

While the main project of the TPA remains finding and protecting remnants of England's first frontier, the TPA Board of Directors have as their primary task the retirement of the TPA start up debt.

### *Membership*

Option 1: You can renew using your credit card via the Triangle Communities Foundation at: [www.trianglecf.org](http://www.trianglecf.org)

Option 2: You can click the "Donate Now" button on the right side of the screen, and that will take you to PayPal, a secure transaction site. You'll be asked a few questions to create an account so as to protect your sensitive information, and then you'll be able to donate using a credit card or other vehicle.

Option 3: The membership form can be downloaded from the website and sent in to the address below with your payment.

#### Levels of Membership:

- Sponsor: \$1,000
- Patron: \$500
- Advocate: \$250
- Ally: \$100
- Family: \$45
- Individual: \$30
- Student: \$10

## *Programs and Events*

-‘First Sunday’ hike every month

-People can make suggestions if they supply the following information:

-We need to know the names and contact information for all property owners that will be affected

-The site needs sufficient parking for a dozen or more cars,

-The hike needs artifact content, historic merit, something to trigger the hikers' imaginations; we need a description of the site,

-There needs to be a passable route suitable for hikers of all ages,

-The route should be less than two miles long, depending on artifact

content. That is, the more there is to see, the shorter should be the hike.

-The trail head needs to be accessible without heroic driving.

-Had informational table at Archaeology Day at UVM Chapel Hill

-Board members are also available to present at engagements such as: history clubs, in classrooms, at historic focused conferences, government meetings, other non-profit organizations etc.

-Beer Tasting at Earth Fare in Raleigh: On the last Friday in February, Friday, Feb. 27 from 6:30 to 8:30 The Duck-Rabbit Brewery and Earth Fare will host a beer tasting at Earth Fare's Brier Creek location in the Briardale Shopping Center. Featuring live music, the full Duck Rabbit artisan beer collection and snacks, this tasting will offer attendees the opportunity to explore this amazing collection and how taverns influenced travel and development in colonial piedmont North Carolina. Tickets are \$10 per person, which includes a souvenir Duck Rabbit pint glass. All proceeds will benefit the Trading Path Association.

-Organized clean up days focusing on different areas on the path

-Beaten Paths blog kept by President and Founder Tom Magnuson

- This blog is about how, why and where to find old paths, trails and roads in Virginia and The Carolinas. The short version is that one finds these old traces so as to identify archaeologically sensitive ground. You may be surprised to learn just how much remains of the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Through this blog we hope to engage your imagination and perhaps even your hands in the largest recovery project ever attempted in North America.

-Facebook Page w/ 115 members

-Description on Facebook page: TPA is a 501C3 non-profit located in Hillsborough, North Carolina, USA. Its purpose is to find, map, and protect landscape remnants of the contact and colonial era in southeastern North America, on England's first American frontier.

-Twitter Account w/ 22 followers

-Built in e-mail template right on website. Fields on “Contact Us” part of site where user can fill in:

-Name

-E-mail Address

- Message Subject
- Message
- Option to send the message to your own e-mail address as well.

*Partnership*

Supporters of the TPA:

- Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, Greensboro, NC  
[www.nps.gov/guco](http://www.nps.gov/guco)
- Cowpens National Military Park, Chesnee, SC  
[www.nps.gov/cowp](http://www.nps.gov/cowp)
- The Yadkin-Pee Dee Lakes Project  
[www.lakesproject.org](http://www.lakesproject.org)
- The Alliance for Historic Hillsborough, Hillsborough, NC  
[www.historichillsborough.org](http://www.historichillsborough.org)
- Research Laboratories of Archaeology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
[www.rla.unc.edu](http://www.rla.unc.edu)
- Wake Forest Museum of Anthropology  
[www.wfu.edu/Academic-departments/Anthropology/museum](http://www.wfu.edu/Academic-departments/Anthropology/museum)
- The Eno River Association, Durham, NC  
[www.enoriver.org](http://www.enoriver.org)
- Occaneechee Band of the Saponi Indians  
[www.occaneechi-saponi.org](http://www.occaneechi-saponi.org)
- Historic Stagville Foundation, Durham, NC  
[www.historicstagvillefoundation.org](http://www.historicstagvillefoundation.org)
- Ayr Mount Historic Site, Hillsborough, NC  
<http://www.presnc.org/seerestorations/ayrmount/ayrmount.html>
- The Yadkin-Pee Dee Lakes Project, Badin, NC  
[www.stanly.com/lakesregion/project.html](http://www.stanly.com/lakesregion/project.html)
- Rural Heritage Forum, Chapel Hill, NC  
[www.ruralheritageforum.org](http://www.ruralheritageforum.org)
- NC Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, NC  
[web.dcr.state.nc.us](http://web.dcr.state.nc.us)
- NC Department of Commerce, Raleigh, NC  
[www.commerce.state.nc.us](http://www.commerce.state.nc.us)
- Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
[www.dhr.state.va.us](http://www.dhr.state.va.us)
- South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office  
[www.state.sc.us/scdah/histrcpl.htm](http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/histrcpl.htm)
- Conservation Trust for North Carolina  
[www.ctnc.org/ctnc/index2.html](http://www.ctnc.org/ctnc/index2.html)
- Alamance County Historic Properties Commission  
[www.alamance-nc.com/planning/historic.htm](http://www.alamance-nc.com/planning/historic.htm)
- The Person County Board of Commissioners, Roxboro, NC  
[www2.person.net/person/person.htm](http://www2.person.net/person/person.htm)
- The Orange County Board of Education, Hillsborough, NC  
[www.orange.k12.nc.us](http://www.orange.k12.nc.us)



- Orange County Schools
- Curriculum Development Project
- Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools
- Hillsborough Heritage Preservation Project
- Sustainable America
- Site Development Cooperation Agreement

*Contact Information*

Address: P.O. Box 643 Hillsborough, NC 27278  
 Phone: 919-644-0600  
 Website: <http://www.tradingpath.org/>  
 E-mail: form to fill out on website

***KAWARTHA LAKES GREEN TRAILS ALLIANCE***

*Introduction*

The Kawartha Lakes Green Trails Alliance is a not for profit organization whose mission is to promote a compatible system of sustainable trails within the City of Kawartha Lakes in Ontario, Canada for the benefit of all residents and visitors. The organization seeks to be a voice for self propelled, active trail opportunities. Along with their Alliance partners they seek to improve personal health and the local economy by promoting walking and cycling opportunities for residents to encourage active lifestyles. Through the volunteer efforts of their Board of Directors and members, their vision is to have the City of Kawartha Lakes become a better place to live by improving cycling, walking, jogging, running, in line skating opportunities and accessibility for the disabled.

*History of Development*

A timeline of the development and accomplishments of the Kawartha Lakes Green Trails Alliance is outlines below:

- 2005- (at the end of June) 14 people came together to start to organize a group dedicated to mostly non motorized users. At this meeting the name “Kawartha Lakes Green Trails Alliance” was adopted. Dan Kaldeway was elected President. Membership comprised of individuals, Kawartha Cycling Club
- 2005- East Cameron Lake Rate Payers Association joins the Green Trails Alliance
- 2005- Summer and Fall- meetings were held to prepare for input and responses to the Kawartha Trails Master Plan- presentations were made.
- 2005- end of summer over 500 people had taken out memberships
- 2006- January-February incorporation papers were prepared
- 2006- April – Kawartha Lakes Green Trails Alliance became officially a not for profit incorporated organization- First Executive- Dan Kaldeway President, Bill Steffler Vice President, Barb MacPherson Secretary and Barb Rose Treasurer

- 2006- CHEST grant Committee approved \$125,000 for the upgrade and paving of 1.6km of trail along the VRT
- 2006- Sept- Oct lobbied to candidates running for office to have the Trails Master Plan approved by the new incoming Council
- 2006- Late Fall major campaign to stop ATV use on our streets occurred
- 2007- January presentation to Council to stop ATV use on our streets throughout CKL- decision by Council to allow on Fenelon Falls streets
- 2007- March By Law passed making sections of the VRT for only non motorized use
- 2007- May – approved for grants from Ministry of Health Promotion- Trans Canada Trail Lesson Plans and Ministry of Tourism and Recreation – Geocaching Workshops
- 2007- June- VRT section of trail paved- immediately trail use tripled
- 2007- August- Official opening of the new paved trail

### *Membership*

To join the Green Trails movement, receive updates on events and workshops, an invitation to the Annual General Meeting you must fill out a form available on their website and e-mail or mail your membership with the fee to the organization.

Only one membership option: Green Trails Enthusiast - \$5.00 annual membership

-Improved communication with members and the public by successfully running articles or notices about the Green Trails Alliance and its activities in local newspapers from April to October

-Currently has over 500 members

### *Programs and Events*

-GPS/Geo-coaching Training:

In one and half hours you can learn how to use a GPS unit to find hidden treasures around the world (over 70 caches hidden in City of Kawartha Lakes alone)

- For \$10 you can be given a one-one personal lesson.
- You will find two or three hidden caches
- GPS units are provided for Free Use
- All funds are used to help maintain and build trails in CKL

-David Archibald - Singer and Song Writer was commissioned by the Kawartha Lakes Green Trails Alliance to write a song about the new Kawartha Trans Canada Trail as a result of funding provided to their organization by the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion- Trails for Life Grant program. The song titled " One Step at a Time" was sung for the first time at the Grand Opening of the Kawartha Trans Canada Trail Oct 7th at Sir Sandford Fleming College. Copies of the song will be made available by the end of November please check the Kawartha Trans Canada Trail web site to find out more about this song. (mp3 available on website, but link doesn't work)

-Sound Bytes: Podcasts available for download on website

Created a series of podcasts that describe the many points of interest and history along the trail. You can download the individual MP3 files and save them to your personal MP3 player. Play them as you travel the Kawartha Trans Canada Trail and take in each point of interest (whistle stop) along the way.

Introduction (4.1mb)

Whistle Stop 1 Agriculture (4.5mb)

Whistle Stop 2 Community in Action (3.2mb)

Whistle Stop 3 Village of Reaboro (4.1mb)

Whistle Stop 4 Eskers (2.9mb)

Whistle Stop 5 Trains Planes and People (4.5)

Whistle Stop 6 The Pigeon (3.0mb)

Whistle Stop 7 Marsh or Swamp (2.2mb)

Whistle Stop 8 Beaver Lodge (2.6mb)

Whistle Stop 9 Drumlins (2.2mb)

Whistle Stop 10 Trestle Bridge (2.5mb)

Whistle Stop 11 Missing Link (2.1mb)

Whistle Stop 12 Our Song (6.8mb)

Thank You (1.7mb)

-They also raffled of an iPod to members in conjunction with this project

### *Partnership and Funding*

-Worked with CKL (City of Kawartha Lakes) Parks and Recreation Department in developing plans and work for trail upgrade

-Worked with CKL Parks and Recreation Department and consultant in the preparation of concept drawings for the trail access point at William Street North, Lindsay

-Secured grants from Ministry of Health Promotion for Trail Education (\$) and Ministry of Culture/Sport and Recreation/Citizenship for Geocaching for (\$)

Held Directors GPS training sessions in Lindsay and Peterborough

-Partnered with Sir Sandford Fleming College, Lindsay campus and the Ecosystem Management Program in developing trail education curriculum for Ministry of Health Promotion grant.

-Organized trail work (installation of soil and grass seed) with Boys and Girls Club, Ontario Junior Stewardship Rangers and Sir Sandford Fleming College

-Prepared and submitted a grant application to conduct a specific location study for walking / cycling to be completed by a professional cycling /walking consultant to “close the gap” between the two newly paved 1.6 km trails, William Street North and Orchard Park (Lindsay Legacy Trail) and Logie Street (Scugog / Rotary Trail) in Lindsay. The need to provide a safe route for both the cyclist/walker and automobile is critical to prevent accidents and encourage use of both trails.

-Prepared and submitted a grant application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation funding to assist the Kawartha Trans Canada Trail Association to upgrade the 16 kms. of Trans Canada Trail from Lindsay to Omemeec.

-Prepared and submitted a grant application to the Ministry of Health Promotion to prepare an interpretive guide for the Kawartha Trails Canada Trail.

-People must sign off on a ‘Trail Users Code of Ethics’ before they can become a member so everyone is aware of the rules and regulations. The code can be seen below:

- Expect and respect other users
- Know and obey rules and laws
- Stay on the trail
- Do not disturb plants or animals
- Do not litter
- Respect private property and local residents
- Be prepared, to ensure your safety and the safety of others
- Stay on the right, pass on the left
- Slow when approaching other travelers, and yield to the faster traveler
- Be courteous and communicate with other trail users

-Partnership with Schools:

Staff and students at Mariposa Elementary School are well prepared for studying the great outdoors after the local Green Trails Alliance presented them with the Kawartha Trans Canada Trail Activity Book.

The booklet is designed for teachers or parents to teach children how to use and appreciate the trail. It includes trail etiquette, a quiz, what to take on a walk, ideas for year-round scavenger hunts, and highlights of Fleming College's Frost Campus, which the trail passes through.

It provides a map of Canada with the trail marked. Children use GPS coordinates to locate major cities along the way.

Children will also learn about trestle bridges, including Doube's Bridge and the Omeme craftsman John McCrea who built models of them that are now in the Victoria County Museum.

The booklet also provides a sensory bingo for kids to hear, see, smell and feel the wonders of the trail and encourages them to take photos and post them online.

They also worked to develop a lesson plan covering a variety of topics for several grade levels which is attached to this final document. The lesson plan can also be downloaded here: [http://www.greentrailsalliance.ca/resources/lesson\\_plans.htm](http://www.greentrailsalliance.ca/resources/lesson_plans.htm)

### *Contact Information*

Address: 3 - 232 Kent Street West ☐Lindsay, Ontario K9V 6A4

Website: <http://www.greentrailsalliance.ca/>

E-Mail: [admin@greentrailsalliance.ca](mailto:admin@greentrailsalliance.ca)

## *CATAMOUNT FAMILY CENTER*

“The most successful unsuccessful business there is.” Jim McCullough (Owner)

### *Introduction*

The Catamount Family Center is a multi-faceted recreational operation located in Williston, Vermont. A huge operation in north Williston, the Center offers users a wide-range of activities including walking, running and biking in the spring, summer and fall seasons and snowshoeing and Nordic skiing in the winter months. Additionally users may use the Center’s ice-skating rink and large, sloping hills for sledding and snowboarding when seasonally appropriate. Additionally throughout the year the Center hosts a variety of events including the incredibly popular “Haunted Forest” during late October.

### *History of Development*

- Catamount has been owned by the McCullough family since the late 1800s. Situated on 500 acres.
- Open for public use for 27 years
- Became a 501(c)(3) on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2005
- Added more stakeholders to lessen pressures on family business

From website:

“The catamount outdoor family center has been the family home of the McCullough family since 1873. The place was originally the home farm of Giles Chittenden. The main house was built by his father, Vermont's first Governor, Thomas Chittenden, in 1796. The property at Catamount is listed by the Vermont Division for Historic Places and the national Register of Historic Places as the "Giles Chittenden Homestead".

The land is situated on two hills affording vistas including the Green Mountains and the Winooski River Valley in the East and the Adirondacks and Lake Champlain in the West. A pleasant combination of woodland, pasture, and cropland combine with mostly gently rolling terrain to make this 500 acre property a gem in burgeoning Chittenden County.

We started the recreation/conservation land use experiment in 1978 that you see here today. The property has become a model of education, agriculture, forestry, wildlife management, conservation, historic preservation, and recreation. it regularly services Vermonters throughout the Northwest quadrant of the state. It is also a destination for tourists from around the globe”  
(<http://www.catamountoutdoor.com/allaboutus.html>)

## *Membership*

There are different membership rates and options depending on the season. There are also a number of lesson/instruction packages available for various activities. As with the Catamount Trail Association there is a major focus on winter events.

### *Programs and Events*

#### -Races

- Weekly running/mountain bike races on Wednesdays (seasonally)
- Promotes friendly competition and outdoor activities

#### -Eco-Conservation Camp

-“ This half day camp(8:00-12:00) is designed for kids ages 9-12 who have a genuine interest in the natural world. This exploratory camp will cover topics such as leave-no-trace hiking, nature journaling, active conservation & trail building, wildlife management, as well as nature education of plants, animals, geology and more! \$120 Camp Fee. Limit 20.”

#### -Haunted Forest

-“ The Haunted Forest in Williston Vermont is a Halloween Tradition combining Halloween, Community, and Theater in the woods of the Catamount Family Center”

## *Partnerships*

Salomon  
Ski Rack  
Climb High  
Julbo

Earl’s Cyclery  
White’s Green Mountain Bikes  
Green Mountain Rehab  
Five Hill’s Bikes

## *Contact Information*

Address: 592 Governor Chittenden Rd. Williston, VT 09495

Phone: 802-879-6001

Website: [www.catamountoutdoor.com](http://www.catamountoutdoor.com)

E-mail: [info@catamountoutdoor.com](mailto:info@catamountoutdoor.com)

## ***CATAMOUNT TRAIL***

### *Introduction*

The Catamount Trail is a 300 mile long public trail used primarily for winter activities such as cross country skiing and snowshoeing. It runs the entire length of Vermont and offers sections for all ages and levels of skiers and snowshoers from beginner to

advanced. There are 31 trail sections in total- each with a different volunteer trail chief who looks after his or her section.

### *History of Development*

#### Timeline-

- August 1982- Three friends- Steve Bushey, Ben Rose and Paul Jarris decide they want to ski from Quebec to Massachusetts and map a trip to do so
- “Trip” became idea to create state-long ski trail
- March 1984- Bushey, Rose and Jarris complete Vermont ski trip
- TBD- grant from Vermont Travel Division to publish map of trail
- 1985- Rose becomes ED of CTA
- June 1985- CTA tries to partner with GMC\*
- Fall 2007- Catamount Trail Connects 100%

\*GMC/CTA- In 1985 the CTA approached the GMC to become a partner and GMC was not interested. This was actually a beneficial development for the CTA in the long run as it helped the CTA to become a stronger organization.

### *Membership*

Six different membership levels offered. Currently over 1800 members. According to one full time employee at the Catamount Trail the membership turnover rate from year-to-year is incredibly low- estimated only 300 members left last year which means there is a return member rate of 83%. The #1 reason cited for becoming a member was getting the rewards booklet.

Membership Benefits include: Rewards booklet (i.e. coupon book), discounted entries for events (i.e. Backcountry Ski Festival, Race to the Top of Vermont, etc.), newsletter subscription, merchandise discounts, free guided ski tours and lessons.

### *Programs & Events*

-Offer a variety of events free to CTA members with emphasis on providing free instruction/demonstrations

#### -Major Events

- Race to the Top of Vermont (August- Raffle/BBQ followed)
  - Walk, bike, run, hike to the top of Mount Mansfield
  - Combined with BBQ and Raffle
  - Held in partnership with charity for mentoring
  - Most lucrative fundraising event of all time for organization
- Ladies Nordic Ski Expo (January)

- Event only for women with ski demonstrations, demo gear and other nordic-skiing related activities
- Held in conjunction with afterparty, “Apres-Ski” with wine and cheese
- Annual Meeting/Bring on the Snow Celebration (November)
- Various Nordic ski races throughout the winter

*Funding*

Membership\_ Constitutes the largest part of funding for trail/activities.

Donations- On the website there are two different donation options which are nicely labeled and offer good explanations of how the funding is allocated. If you choose to make a donation to the “Annual Fund” your donation goes towards covering expenses like staff salaries, day-to-day office expenses, newsletter expenses and funding some of the CTA’s annual events. If you choose to make a “Trail Fund” donation your money will go towards helping to pay for things like easements, trail maintenance (building bridges, securing trail paths) and general trail protection.

*Partnerships/Sponsors*

Sojourn Bicycling & Active Vacations  
 SkiMaven Ski Blog  
 Spare Time Bowling Alley  
 Fleischer Jacobs Group  
 (title sponsor of *Race to the Top*)  
 Rossignol  
 NBT Bank  
 BlueCross BlueShield  
 Trapp Family Lodge  
 Paul Frank Collins Law Firm  
 Dinse Knapp McAndrew Law Firm

Stowe  
 Patagonia  
 Cabot  
 SkiRack  
 Maplefields  
 Lake Champlain Chocolates  
 Salomon  
 Concept Rowing  
 Darn Tough Socks  
 Redwood Creek  
 Bolton Valley

*Contact Information*

Address: 1 Mill Street Burlington, VT 05495  
 Phone: 802-864-5794  
 Website: [www.catamounttrail.org](http://www.catamounttrail.org)  
 E-Mail: [info@catamounttrail.org](mailto:info@catamounttrail.org)



## IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS

### MEMBERSHIP

#### *Seasonal Membership Option*

- Rather than offering just one annual membership, provide incentive for seasonality within membership. Promote the natural capital of the Mad River Valley and the seasonality of Vermont.
- Capitalize on tourism and non-locals. Offer Adult Day/Weekend passes for \$10 and Child Day/Weekend Passes \$5 (8-15 years) and free for children under 7.
- Offer options for the indecisive
  - “White” Season – December through March
  - “Green” Season – April through August
  - “Harvest” Season – September through November
  - Continue the division between individual and family memberships, but include different local business/sponsor memberships and Student Passes.

#### *Business Membership*

We feel that it would be beneficial to the Mad River Path Association to create some sort of business membership option or perhaps multiple levels of business sponsorship options. This sort of membership would cost more than an individual or family membership but would offer more in return for the business. Some of our ideas for “return” on a business membership are listed below.

##### Tangible

- Company logo and/or link to company website on MRPA website
- Potential free/discounted ad space at MRPA events (e.g. logo on “Mad Dash” jerseys or t-shirts, banners displayed at “Mad Bash,” visibility at other events)
- Potential free/discounted ad space in MRPA publications
- Newsletter, group e-mails, event advertising

##### Intangible

- Company gets to be associated with/supporter of a local not-for-profit and may gain a more positive image in community. \*Perhaps there could be a separate section of the website dedicated only to business membership/sponsorship perks\*
- Additionally, based on our case studies we found that one of the most effective ways to gain new members was by providing services to entice potential members:
  - Membership Perks:
  - Coupon booklet
  - Discount entry at events
  - Newsletter subscription
  - Invitation to monthly walk
  - More user friendly online membership option

- Credit card option

#### *Computer Data Management System*

This could help manage several aspects that are critical to the success of the MRPA. A data management system could easily:

- Keep track of when people become members: making rolling membership option easier and more feasible
- Store credit card information: making membership renewal process easier
- Manage mail lists (regular mail and e-mail): could make it easier to send out newsletters on a more regular basis. Could store both electronic and physical addresses.
- Keep track of the status of certain projects (i.e. what needs to be done for events,) and serve a communication tool to make sure everyone that uses it is on the same page about projects
- Keep track of information regarding selling ad space (i.e. number of impressions, dates ads are sold for, business contact information)

#### Potential Data Management Systems

- Wild Apricot: <http://www.wildapricot.com/default2.aspx> Membership Management Software
- Ebase: <http://www.ebase.org/home> Community Relationship Management Software
- Innovative Technology Solutions: <http://www.innovativetechsolutions.net/nonprofit-solutions/data-management-software>

The following is a link to an article comparing several different packages and highlighting their benefits: [http://www.idealware.org/articles/low\\_cost\\_integrated.php](http://www.idealware.org/articles/low_cost_integrated.php)

#### *Annual member banquet to encourage member retainment*

Provide a sense of commonality and community with the members of the Path. They all have the Path in common. Make the most of this connection!

#### *Reinstate MRPA Newsletter*

Newsletter could be offered several times a year (biannually or quarterly/seasonally). Send out one paper copy via the regular mail to physical street addresses and send out the others via e-mail. This would cut out printing and mailing costs while still sharing MRPA news and information with members and potential members. Newsletters can also be archived on the website for people to look back past news and events.

#### *Create Historically Focused Aspects of the Path*

Incorporate historically focused information on the area into promotion of the path. Work with the Mad River Valley Rural Historic District and other similar organizations to research the historical significance of the land that the path covers. Would attract the interest of a new audience that is interested in the history of the area and would add more value and prestige to the path. This could also inspire ideas for new events such as reenactments, celebrations recognizing significant historical events, and historically themed walks and hikes on the path recognizing notable sites and locations. There could

also be a page on the MRPA website highlighting important historical information for members and potential members to peruse and learn about the area. There are also grants that are specifically available for historical research, properties, and preservation which the MRPA could apply for to increase funding and gain assistance with this project.

#### *Create a Health-focused Aspect of the Path*

Promote the path as a resource people in the area can use to exercise and as a tool to help them live a healthy lifestyle. There are several ways the path can be used to keep fit (walk, run, snowshoe, bike etc.) and the MRPA should use this to attract the interest of potential members. Rather than have to pay for a gym membership or have to buy expensive work out equipment, people in the Mad River Valley can use the path, as a free public place to work out and stay in shape and this concept should be incorporated in the promotion of the many uses of the path. There are also grants specifically available for health and fitness, health promotion, and for organizations that promote healthy lifestyles. Again, applying for these grants could increase funding for the MRPA and improve the health of people living in the valley. Could also form exercise groups that use the path to partake in an organized exercise plan. Could partner with Fitness On The Run in Waitsfield (<http://fitnessontherunvt.com/>) or other similar organizations in the area to create an exercise program that uses the path.

#### *Members Sign Off on a 'Trail Users Code of Ethics'*

Before becoming a member, people who want to join the MRPA should sign a 'Trail Users Code of Ethics' so they are aware of and agree to the rules of using the path. This code of ethics could be printed on the back side of the membership form so people can read it, sign it, and send it in along with the membership form and their payment and it can all be taken care of in one easy step. This code of ethics should also be on the website so all of the rules and regulations are easily accessible to the public.

#### *Discussion Board on Website for Members and Interested People*

Social Networking can augment community development. In such a technological era, it would be a disservice not to utilize it. Create an interactive blog that allows members to become more involved in the daily vitality of the Path. A blog is a very appropriate means of fostering these interactions for an organization such as this.

### ***FUNDRAISING***

#### *Sell Ad Space on MRPA Website and on Membership Envelope*

- Can sell online banner ads on the MRPA website per impression (number of visitors who see the ads) or for a certain date range (i.e. weekly, monthly, seasonally)
- Can sell ad space on membership envelope so businesses can get their logo on the envelope
- Can also sell ad space on newsletters (both paper and online versions)
- Add 4<sup>th</sup> panel to membership envelope to make more room to sell ad space

- Can charge more than \$125 per ad, research what other local organizations are charging to create a comparable and competitive offer. This could also be an area that the interns help with (i.e. reaching out to businesses, managing impression and date information etc.)
- There could be varying degrees of ads businesses could buy (i.e. online banner ads, logo on website, logo on membership envelope/map, logo on maps posted on the path, sponsorship of a newsletter, sponsorship of an event, booth space at an event, banner/signs at an event, logo on posters for an event etc.)

#### *Work with Sugarbush and Mad River Glen*

- MRPA Banners/advertising on trail map or in lodge
- Mid-Winter event at the ski resorts, can partner with the resorts to help support an event that they already have scheduled (see calendars below) or talk with them to see if the MRPA can create a new event that will be held at the resorts

Events Calendar for Mad River Glen: <http://www.madriverglen.com/?Page=calendar.php>

Events Calendar for Sugarbush:

<http://www.sugarbush.com/vermont-activities-events/calendar>

This is a great way to reach the target market of wealthy people who enjoy outdoor physical activity and already know of and come to the Mad River Valley

#### *Raffle/Silent Auction*

Through gaining information from various case studies we found that silent auctions and/or raffles can be huge money makers. The “set up” cost for these sorts of events is minimal as they can be run concurrently with things like the “Mad Dash” or “Mad Bash.” By getting local (and national) businesses to donate items to be auctioned or raffled off the MRPA can reduce costs and increase revenue. From our research popular ideas for auction/raffle items include:

- Get a family to donate a “weekend getaway” at their vacation home (could be summer, winter, year-round, etc. one example was a family donated a weekend at their home on Martha’s Vineyard)
- Contact airlines like JetBlue for discounted flights/free flights
- Contact large local companies such as Ben & Jerry’s, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters and the like re: “one free pint of ice cream per month”
- Contact the University Mall or Burlington Square Mall for gift certificates
- Contact local sports/outdoor stores for gift certificates
- Contact local ski mountains re: free seasons passes

#### *Reduce Admission Price of Some Events*

Consider offering events that are less dependent on technology (e.g. sound systems) that are offered with lower admission price. A lower admission price at events may make them more affordable and subsequently draw a wider range of people, possibly more families. Events that require less technology may be less susceptible to cancellation due to inclement weather, reducing the possibility that a major fundraiser must be cancelled.

### *Offer Booth Space for Vendors at MRPA Events*

Partner with area restaurants or companies offering them booth space to sell their products at MRPA events such as the Mad Bash. Negotiate terms of profit share with vendors such that the path received a negotiated percent of sales of products from vendors. Encouraging this type of partnership provides an incentive for businesses and the path. Businesses will benefit from sales at the event as well as from exposure in the community. MRPA will benefit from funds raised. Ben and Jerry's, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, American Flatbread or Skinny Pancake might be interested vendors.

### *Recognize Large Community Donors (i.e. name on a bench)*

Initiate a program that awards individuals commitment by publically thanking them. Whether it is a bench program that benefits the path directly or an award program that has an annual recipient at the banquet, any recognition is beneficial.

## **GRANTS**

Expand the number of organizations on MRPA's grant-possibilities list by expanding the activities offered on the path. For example, if the Path began to have a women's health/fitness group they could approach the Women's Sports Foundation in regard to a variety of grants. (<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/Grants-And-Scholarships.aspx>). Additionally, through researching successful grant proposals online the book *Everything You Need To Know About Grants: How To Write The Grant--How To Get The Grant--Where To Get The Grant* by Anthony Hollis proves to be an insightful and useful read in regard to where to look for grants and how to expand an organizations potential opportunities.

## **EASEMENTS**

According to the director of grant writing and trail easements at the Catamount Trail, there are three major points of interest to remember when going after easements. The first is to approach the land-owner with seasonal easements only-emphasize the fact that their property would only be used for a few months of the year. Secondly, it is important for the MRPA to be flexible yet persistent in obtaining easements- while the MRPA and land owners may not always see eye-to-eye, trying to approach the landowners from different perspectives may be helpful in changing their minds. Finally, her advice was to be receptive to the landowner's concerns. Perhaps have other landowners talk to the potential easement owner regarding their experiences (positive, obviously) with working with the MRPA.

## **EVENTS**

### *Create Scheduled Monthly Walks/Hikes on the Path*

Organizing a walk on the first Sunday of every month from April-October would be a great way to bring members and potential members together to spend time together outside on the path. Could advertise these on the website and using the Facebook and

Twitter accounts. There would be some sort of group leader (MRPA board member?) who would be the organizer of the group and walk with everyone down the path. These walks/hikes can be themed (i.e. bird watching, biking, kids day) and suggestions for these themes should be open to the members to submit. This could be a great way to build a sense of community among members and could be a healthy and social way to get people to use the path. There could also be open to non-members and could be used as a tool to let them see the benefits of using the path and as a way to push them to become members of the MRPA.

#### *Art Lessons on Path*

A possible way to encourage both adults and youth to utilize the path and understand the importance of outdoor activities would be to work with an area artist or schoolteacher to offer art lessons along the path. This could be offered as a one-time event or an on-going workshop-like event. The Hudson Valley Rail Trail offered a one-time event on the trail and student artwork is then displayed in city hall.

#### *Field Trip Opportunities with School*

Offer field trips to local schools by hiring someone with environmental and historical knowledge of the path to lead the students on an educational walk down the path. Could charge students a small fee for the services of the leader, and could offer as a paring with the path-focused lesson plans. Would cost nothing to the MRPA if the fee paid by the students covers what the leader charges, and has potential to even bring in a small profit. Most parents are eager to hear about what their children are learning about in school, and if this field trip creates a positive experience for the students, they are likely to want to revisit the path with their families, which could increase the chance of these families becoming members of the MRPA.

#### *Organized Clean-up Days Twice a Year*

One way to keep the path clean and free of litter may be to organize cleanups with area schools a few times a year. Things like this are great because instead of paying someone to do the job, perhaps you could buy a few great prizes that will go to the children who pick up the most garbage! This is again another way to get the community involved in and appreciative of the path itself.

*Allow and promote the use of the path for a wider range of recreational activities (i.e. cross country skiing, snow shoeing, sledding)*

- As outlined in the Kingdom Trails Case Study, recreational activities are a large aspect of the vitality of the organization and the trail itself. This model is reliant on the seasonality of New England and has divided the recreation of the trail into summer and Winter Trail Systems. Under these categories, there are individual sections of trails that are designated for certain activities (i.e. Mountain Biking, Cross-Country Skiing, Snowshoeing, etc.) Creating seasonality of the trails fosters an idea of timeliness with the trail. Non-members see a necessity to act on these recreational activities as they are not year-round activities and they provide a sense of connectivity with the paths. Incorporate these activities into membership by offering certain recreational passes rather than suggest the

ability to participate in recreation if desired. \*(See membership). Give the path an identity by establishing an obvious relationship with recreation.

- Kingdom Trails Mission *“To provide recreation and education opportunities for local residents and visitors while working to conserve natural resources and create economic stimulation.”*

Weekly/monthly races in the summer to promote use of the path and health habits (no cost as long as there is someone in charge)

- Based on our case study of the Catamount Family Center, there is a fairly significant interest in free competitive events such as foot races or bicycle races (or perhaps cross-country ski races in the winter?). If there was someone from the MRPA that would volunteer their time to run these sorts of events it could be another way to gain interest in the path. Along these same lines perhaps there could be some sort of schedule for a women’s exercise group to use the path. This serves two purposes- by again increasing activities and awareness of the path and also by opening up the door for future potential grants from women’s health organizations and/or female athlete organizations.
- Women’s exercise group using the path (major grant area)

*Partner w/ Knoll Farm to incorporate a walk on the path as a part of the retreats that they host*

- Define the relationship with Knoll Farm (and the VFN)
  - What does “Friends of the VFN” actually mean to the MRPA
  - What does it mean to the VFN?
  - Create an understood relationship that has expectations and deliverables (think goods and services)
- Pool the resources of the MRPA and Knoll Farm to incorporate the path in the workshops, retreats, and programs hosted by the Knoll Farm.
- Fold map/membership envelope w/ tear off to send in separate from the map so people can keep the map, able to have more ad space too
- Garbage Cans:
  - Along the path to reduce the amount of garbage

## ***PARTNERSHIPS***

### *Partnership with Local Artist*

Network with a local artist who is willing to create a print featuring a prominent landmark along the Mad River Path. The path association can promote the print in newsletter issues, online and at events in exchange for a portion of profits from art sales. Partnering with local artists can be mutually beneficial. The Mad River Path Association will be able to raise funds by receiving a cut of sales as well as increase awareness of the path and the artist will benefit from additional advertising and exposure in the

community. This fundraising method may be successful in the valley due to skiers and tourists who may want to take home art from the valley.

### *Internship Program*

- Work with college students throughout the state in exchange for college credit. There can be different positions, depending on the students' field of study and the needs of the MRPA (i.e. environmental/sustainability regarding the expansion of the path, administration/non-profit experience, online development, fundraising/partnership/donations/community outreach).
- Work with career services departments to help with facilitation and contact information
  - UVM: <http://www.uvm.edu/~career/>
  - Champlain: <http://www.champlain.edu/Career-Services.html>
  - St. Michael's: <http://www.smcvt.edu/alumni/getInvolved/careerServices>
  - Middlebury: <http://www.middlebury.edu/administration/cso/alumni/services/>
  - Johnson State College: <http://www.jsc.edu/OfficesAndServices/CareerCenter/default.aspx>
- Send out a letter to each of the career services departments to see if there is interest along with an outline of the internship
- The career services departments could help get the word out to students and promote the internship
- Offering an internship would have no financial costs to the MRPA and it could be an opportunity to acquire new skills and help in certain areas while bringing in fresh ideas and perspectives from the college students.

### *Create Facebook and Twitter Accounts for the MRPA*

This could be a great way to spread awareness about the MRPA to the online community for free. Can do a targeted search to find people by region and/or interests to add them as a friend or follower so they get all of the updates from the MRPA pages. These accounts could be used to announce events and new developments (i.e. job postings, grants, looking for interns, grants received etc.). This could also be an area that the interns help manage. See attached screen shots of other path association's Facebook and Twitter pages.

### *Photo Contest*

Encourage path users to submit pictures of the path, people using the path, or of scenery from on the path for a photo contest. Advertise the photo contest on the path's website, newsletter, at locations along the path and/or local newspapers. Have people submit their photos with a form stating where the picture was taken. Photos gathered can then be used to market and promote the path. Because the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail used a contest like this, they were solicited by a private company to provide images for a regional marketing campaign for the Northwestern Medical Center. In this sense the trail was able to benefit from regional marketing and promoting a healthy living. Such a photo contest will encourage community participation and awareness of the path.



### *Develop Lesson Plans to Work with Schools*

Work with local teachers and educators to develop lesson plans that feature the path. See attached lesson plan that was developed by another path association. There are several areas of study that can incorporate the path such as physical education, science/environment, visual arts, language arts, social studies, mapping skills etc. This would gain the partnership of local schools while teaching children about the path. This would also attract attention from parents whose children are learning about the path, which could be a great way to increase membership.

### *Opportunities to ‘Adopt’ a Part of the Path and Opportunities to Collaborate More with the VFN (volunteers)*

- Kingdom Trails establishes partnerships with local volunteers.
- An established routine for trail maintenance allows for consistency in volunteerism and community support. *“The first Sunday of every month (June-October) we meet at the Darling Memorial Park at 9:00 am for a day of trail maintenance.”*
- An agenda is key to the success of an endeavor such as this that involves congregating volunteers.
- <http://www.tripsforkids.org/>
- *“Operating in the United States, Canada and Israel, Trips For Kids® (TFK®) has opened the world of cycling to over 50,000 at-risk youth through mountain bike rides and Earn-A-Bike programs. The more than sixty Trips For Kids chapters we support combine lessons in personal responsibility, achievement and environmental awareness through the development of practical skills, and the simple act of having fun.”*
- Don’t try and reinvent the wheel.

### *Networking with Other Non-profits in the Area*

There is much to be gained from working with other non-profit organizations and cooperation has the possibility to reduce the amount of effort and labor required by either party. There may be opportunities to co-sponsor events, in which case costs, time commitments and labor can be shared. Co-sponsoring events may increase the overall appeal of the event and broaden the audience, bringing together people with different or related interests. This may introduce unlikely people to the Mad River Path Association and could provide additional opportunities to increase membership. One example of working with another non-profit is illustrated by the Hudson Valley Rail Trail (HVRT). HVRT organized a chili fundraiser as a part of their larger “Winter Fest” celebration. To reduce the number of HVRT members required to staff chili tables, they worked with the local Rotary Club. In exchange for Rotary volunteers serving chili at the event, the HVRT permitted the Rotary to conduct their own hot dog and hot chocolate fundraiser sales as well.

### *Partner with Charities in the Area*

Another way in which the Mad River Path Association can draw attention to their cause is by partnering with various charities. A perfect example of one such partnership may

be in the fight against childhood diabetes. For an organization such as the MRPA which is based around physical activity and enjoying the outdoors, to partner with an organization that is promoting healthier habits (especially for children) could be a very good move from a membership standpoint. For example, perhaps a walk could be held to raise money for an organization like the Children's Diabetes Foundation, with an underlying tone of emphasizing exercise for all ages and how the path could be the place they exercise.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In the end, there are so many ways to operate and fund a path non-profit. However, at the heart of a community initiative like the Mad River Path's is the commitment and devoted effort put forth by its committed volunteers and community members. Every community initiative is unique due to both its place and its people and therefore what works and is successful for one community may not necessarily have the same results for another community.

The Mad River Path Association faces some unique challenges regarding land use and right of way but it has so many opportunities for building its organization and building community. It is our hope that some of the ideas and suggestions provided may help to build on the numerous opportunities MRPA has to involve the community in building an alternative transportation and recreation route that utilizes the natural surroundings of the valley.

The suggestions provide a range of ideas, some complex and time intensive, others more manageable requiring less time and resources. It is our hope that this resource may provide the Mad River Path Association some food for thought as it continues to work towards its mission benefitting the community of the Mad River Valley.