

## **VERMONT MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOCIATION**

### **POSITION PAPER: ROGUE TRAIL BUILDING AND USE ON PUBLIC LAND**



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The Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA) is aware of rogue mountain bike trail building and use on public land. These activities do not represent the intent or interests of VMBA. They are, however, indicative of the passion members of the mountain bike community have for developing new recreational assets and symptomatic of the challenges often faced in expanding recreational trails on public lands in Vermont. VMBA is committed to developing access to public land through transparent relationships with public land managers grounded in understanding and respect. We also recognize that sustainable access will require sensitivity and respect for a diverse range of public land users and that access will vary depending on the scope of public demand and management plans.

Mountain biking in Vermont has a rich history. Trail building, use, and ongoing maintenance began long before VMBA was founded. Some of our most popular trails were built on public land without permission and were, eventually, adopted as official trails. This “ask forgiveness, not permission” approach is no longer serving our community and not only harms the relationships we have developed with public land managers, but cuts the public out of the decision making process of how our public lands should be used. Beyond trail building, riding on trails not designated for mountain biking on public land is in violation of State and Federal policy and further encourages and promotes rogue building.

VMBA is also committed to educating our membership. Through our Chapters, we encourage responsible and legal approaches to gain access to public lands, and we work with public land agencies to provide information that VMBA can share towards this end. VMBA is committed to sharing best practice trail building and maintenance techniques and facilitating the growth of trusting relationships between Chapter trail builders and public land managers. We believe that the development of these trust-based relationships and a track record of sanctioned trail development will ultimately lead to more opportunities and fewer challenges for our Chapters to develop trails on public lands.

VMBA has a strong relationship with the US Forest Service and serves as the corridor manager for mountain bike trails on Vermont Department of Forests Parks and Recreation lands. We desire a similar relationship with the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, though until such a relationship has been adopted, request that riders please respect the current rule prohibiting bicycle riding on Wildlife Management Area lands unless on designated, signed corridors.

Nick Bennette, Executive Director

AND

The VMBA Board of Directors

## VMBA CHAPTER SIGNATORIES

