



# **SULLIVAN COUNTY TRAILS PLAN**

**AUGUST 2023**

Prepared by

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recognizing that one of our region's greatest assets is its natural beauty, Sullivan County applied for and received a grant to inventory and promote all recreational trails within the county. This effort allowed greater public involvement with the trails that already exist in our region for both motorized (OHRV/Snowmobile) and non-motorized (hiking, biking, walking) users.



We believe recreational trails are a key resource in the Sugar River Region.

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) led on this project, bringing in the Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA) to assist. Public forums and public surveys were important tools used to gather feedback from stakeholders and develop a way forward to protect the trail network in the county.



We want to better understand the role that trails play in quality of life, economic vitality, and regional identity.

Outdoor recreation is important for physical and mental health. Many people in Sullivan County enjoy the outdoors but have indicated that they are unaware of more than a handful of places to go. Additionally, visitors to our region will be able to experience our natural wonders on our terms as we invite them to share our beauty (and their dollars!) with us. This effort will better inform our friends and neighbors about new opportunities to discover natural beauty in our own backyard. Through this process, Sullivan County has been able to inventory trail networks, connect trail maintenance groups and community stakeholders, and develop a path forward that takes all users into consideration for trail use.



We want to identify the high-level projects, investments, strategies, and partnerships that will improve the quality and connectivity of trails and boost the region's outdoor recreation economy.

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We can achieve this by learning from our residents, trail organizations, local leaders, and business community.

Sullivan County believes that trails are an important natural and economic resource that is vital to the health of the county's future. By taking steps now to inventory trails and plan for the future, Sullivan County can ensure the protection of these assets for years to come.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Sugar River Region

Nestled in the western foothills of New Hampshire and spanning an area of 528 square miles, the Sugar River Region lies within Sullivan County along the eastern edge of New Hampshire and Vermont's Connecticut River Valley. As New Hampshire's smallest county by area, the Sugar River Region is mostly rural with small clusters of villages and the city of Claremont serving as its small urban hub. The Sugar and Cold Rivers have long served as important lifelines to the region, from fishing and sustenance to water-powered mills to outdoor recreation. This region has a proud history of industrious ingenuity, providing much of the technology needed for the United States' westward expansion through innovative techniques developed here in New Hampshire. This region is also known for its wealth of natural resources, manufacturing heritage, recreational amenities, and scenic views including Mount Croydon and Mount Sunapee as well as Lake Sunapee along the region's northeastern border and the Connecticut River serving as the western border of the county.

## Purpose of the Plan

In New Hampshire, towns manage most of their natural resources at the local level. This ensures that land management is done with the best interest of residents in mind, but it can lead to disjointed efforts across a wider region. Through recent studies and community engagement, Sullivan County has seen that its trails and natural resources are a large economic driver for the region and enhancing these assets can unify the efforts to promote the Sugar River Region as a destination for outdoor recreation enthusiasts. Until now, no unifying effort had been made to inventory, catalog, and promote the trails in the region. Combined with an increase in property transfers and concerns about the long-term health of trail access, Sullivan County leaders saw the need to preserve the existing trail networks and encourage better stewardship and promotion. The Sullivan County Trails Plan aimed to provide a one-stop website for all trail-related information in the county, enabling people to find new trails to explore and opportunities for engagement with trail maintenance groups. The plan will also provide a template for adding new trails to the inventory as groups become engaged, as well as creating a unifying theme for signage and information. The plan will also identify gaps in the trail network that can be closed to provide greater connectivity between trails and provide towns with maps that identify the trails and Class VI roads within their boundaries. After the trails have been cataloged and inventoried, they will also be promoted according to the desires of the trail stewards to regulate foot traffic and limit over-exposure, but still allowing those groups who want more visitors to attract them. The Sullivan County Trails Plan will ensure the long-term health of its trail network,

promote outdoor recreation, and provide residents with the opportunity to better engage with one of their most important natural resources.

## GOALS OF THE PLAN

The goals of the plan will identify where the strengths and weaknesses are within the region's trails. Knowing where the trails have shortcomings highlights the areas that need investment the most and will have the greatest impact.

Once there is a clear plan of how to best improve the trails and the outdoor recreation economy, we can work towards gaining support.

Building support, public and monetary, will bolster the trails and allow a great community to flourish, both recreational users and those who will use a sufficient trail network as an alternate mode of transportation.

An established community of all the aforementioned groups would allow for continued support and growth of Sullivan County trails.

### Goal 1

- Better understand the role that trails play in quality of life, economic vitality, and regional identity

### Goal 2

- Identify the high-level projects, investments, strategies, and partnerships that will improve the quality and connectivity of trails and boost the region's outdoor recreation economy

### Goal 3

- Recognize and build support for recreational trails as a key resource in the Sugar River Region

### Goal 4

- Build a strong network of residents, trail organizations, local leaders, and the business community to support recreational trails in the region.

# PUBLIC INPUT

## Methodology

Staff at UVLSRPC collected the data on this project in several different ways. First, a public survey occurred from February 7 through April 4, 2023. This survey was publicized by Sullivan County, UVLSRPC, trail groups, and any other community interest. A total of 494 responses were collected and a wide variety of users contributed to the result. Most respondents were from Sullivan County, with over 140 coming from Claremont alone. Respondents were from towns across New Hampshire as well as Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont. Given the amount of tourism and second homes available in Sullivan County, these responses were to be expected. More details can be found in the appendix.

Public forums were also held during that time, with three being online via Zoom for all trail users and one in person for snowmobile groups. Each Zoom forum had between 20-45 participants with a variety of trail uses represented and participants were able to have open and honest conversations about their experiences on trails in the county, the state, and elsewhere. This input directly informed the findings of this report and served as a valuable asset for developing solutions.

## Results

The survey was intentionally designed to be quick with minimal time for responding to capture as many users as possible. We asked these questions:

Multiple Choice questions:

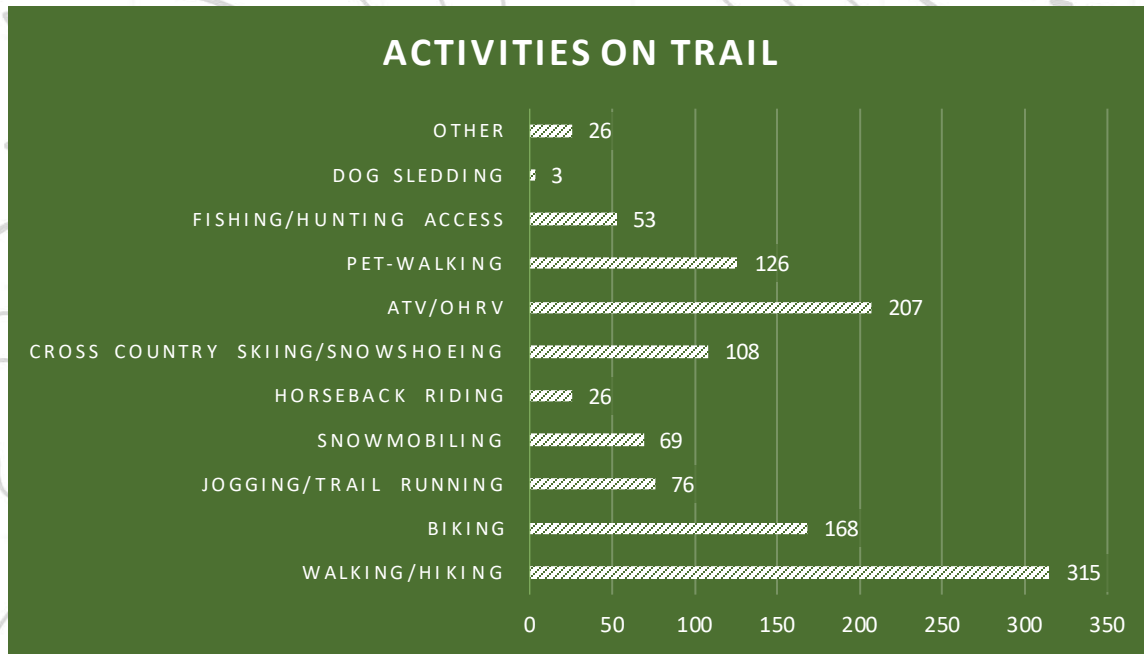
- How often do you use trails in Sullivan County?
- What activities do you do on trails?
- What would you consider your main use of trails?

Open-ended questions:

- How do you access trail information?
- What makes a trail location challenging to use? Easy to use?
- What is missing in the trail network?
- Household ages and town residency
- Estimated average hours spent and miles traveled per trail visit

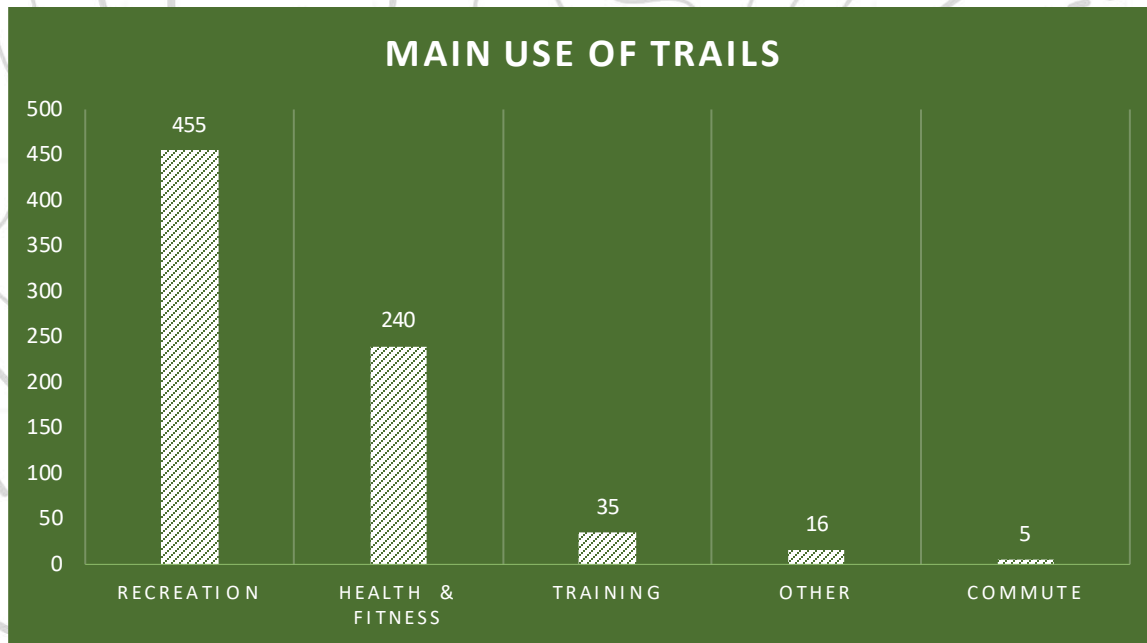
Results are shared below, with graphs for the multiple choice questions and word clouds for the open-ended ones. Word clouds capture the number of times words are used across responses to pull out often-repeated ideas so the biggest issues are brought to the forefront.

## What activities do you do on the trails? (select all that apply)

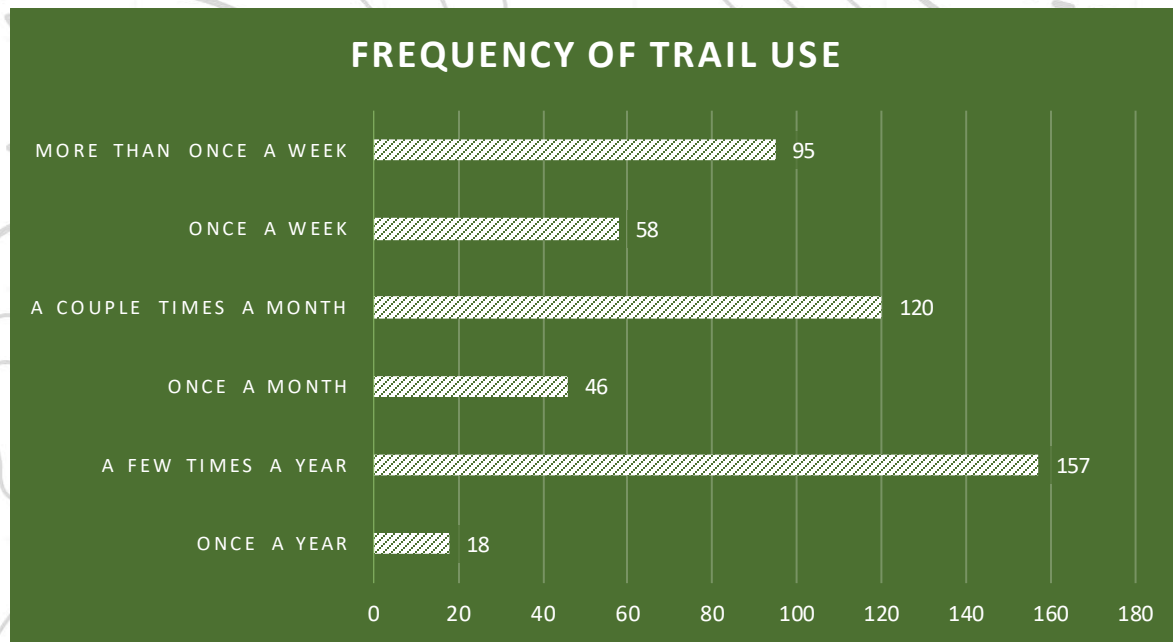


## What would you consider your main use of the trails?

(select up to two)



## Generally, how often do you use trails in Sullivan County?



## When thinking about access to the trail, what makes a trail location challenging to use? Easy to use?







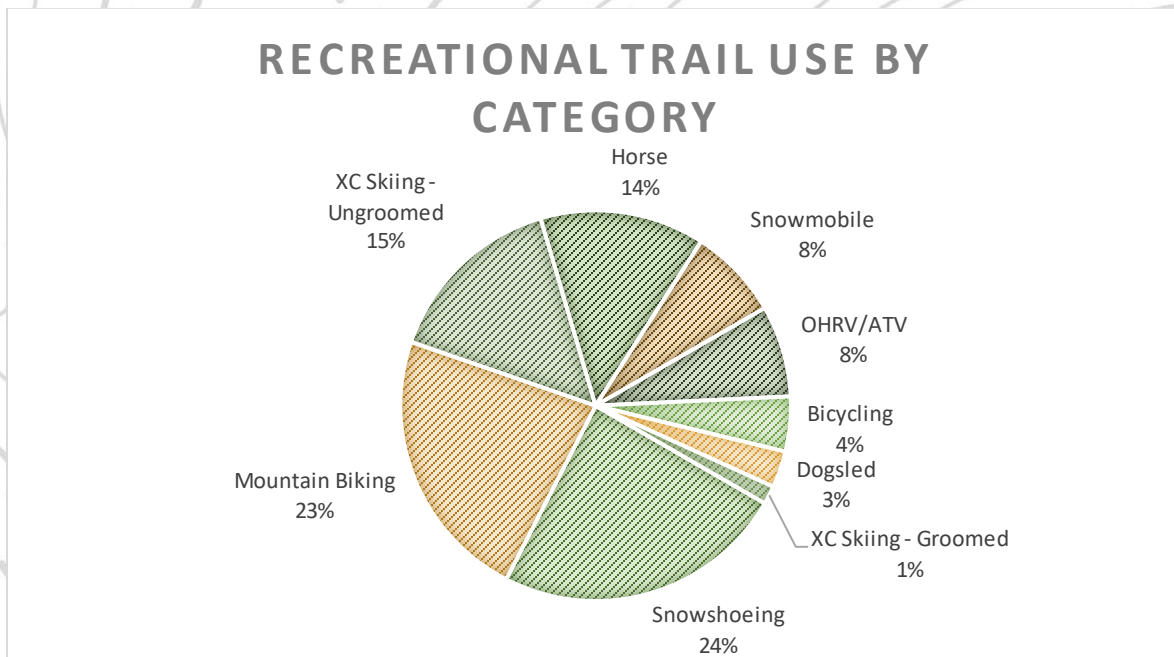
# TRAIL INVENTORY

## Methodology

The inventory of all known public trails in Sullivan County has been completed with 49 different trails identified, maintained by 23 different stakeholder groups. Trails have been sorted by use, type, and access. Outreach to these stakeholders occurred during late 2022 and early 2023 to survey them and arrange for their active participation in the SCTP. A variety of volunteer and professional organizations maintain trails within the county, from town Conservation Commissions to snowmobile clubs to the State of NH to the National Park Service. Trails have been identified on TrailFinder with the appropriate files needed and are listed at the end of this report. Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA) and Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) collected this data. In addition to the trails inventoried by UVTA and UVLSRPC, a state directory of snowmobile trails and Class VI roads were used to identify both active trails and rights-of-way for trails.

## Trail Uses By Category

Current trail use assumes hiking/walking are the main uses of all trails. In addition, the current makeup of trail uses, based on input from trail maintenance groups, is as follows:



Outreach was completed with the assistance of the Upper Valley Trails Alliance to ensure that all trails were inventoried; outreach with the stakeholders occurred to 1) check the accuracy of our data and 2) determine the participation level of each

organization in the SCTP. At the initial onset of the plan, it was determined that participation will fall under three tiers:

**Tier One:** Heavy promotion of trails and strong participation in the SCTP. Direction of resources for popularizing these trails as well as leveraging popularity to ensure that lower tiered trails receive benefit from proximity.

**Tier Two:** Passive promotion of a trail (such as listing in an inventory on TrailFinder) but not pushing visitors to the site through active advertising.

**Tier Three:** No promotion of trails with as little publicity as possible. Prefer to stay unlisted.

After meeting with stakeholders, it was determined that this project alone could not designate different trails on a tiered system and that an alternative methodology be implemented with an increased amount of public input and coordination from all parties involved. **It is recommended that this process be implemented by the newly formed Sullivan County Trails Council, as outlined in the action plan.**

Recommended members would possibly include representatives from the following:

- Sullivan County
- Upper Valley Trails Alliance
- Snowmobile Clubs (not all, but rotate 2 groups annually)
- Municipalities (through recreation and conservation)
- Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association
- NH Bureau of Trails
- Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests
- UVLSRPC
- Members of the public with a vested interest in the trails (active hikers, bikers, equestrians, etc.)
- One or two state representatives
- Other members as determined by Sullivan County Commissioners

This group could set the trail tiers and invite public feedback, as well as being responsible for promotion of trails and integration with the Sugar River Region tourism efforts. Members would serve set terms and the County Commission would establish meeting parameters and powers of the Trails Council. However, the strength of the Trails Council would only be as strong as RSAs allow and could run into difficulties if municipalities and/or landowners are not on board with the effort. That being said, there are enough trails and opportunities within Sullivan County to begin an effort to better manage and coordinate trails within the region.

## Gap Analysis

UVLSRPC utilized GIS tools to determine gaps in the trail system. For this project, gaps were defined as breaks in the trail system where a user could not get from one point to another with less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  mi on paved roads, or a break in the trail where amenities are more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  mi from a trail head. Gaps were then individually reviewed based on proximity to other trails and amenities, accessibility, and ease of connections to determine feasibility. Gap segments deemed “feasible” were identified on the maps.

Physical gaps between trails are everywhere in the current trail system. There are gaps between trails and services such as gas stations and restaurants. Connecting these together would make the trail more useful, attract more customers, and provide economic growth for the town. To further create a cohesive web of trails, gaps between current trail systems must be filled. At all public forums, users expressed an interest in using amenities that were along the trail, and shared stories of other places both nearby (along the Northern Rail Trail) and far (along the Pacific Coast and in the Rockies) that had clearly marked amenities along the trail and easy on/off access.

There is also an accessibility gap with trailheads often hidden or not clearly marked, causing confusion as to where the user is supposed to go. On top of poorly marked trails, parking can be a challenge as towns often neglect clearing their outdoor recreation parking areas of snow during the winter. Unplowed parking causes even more unnecessary confusion as nobody but resolute locals will be able to decipher where they should be going.

Apart from physical gaps, there are gaps between the different uses themselves, with a plethora of different recreation happening. Unfortunately, many of the uses are not easily compatible with each other all the time. Hiking on a mountain bike trail or snowmobiling on a pedestrian trail are both extremely dangerous, but many trails have users that co-exist (such as biking and hiking). Bridging the gap between these distinct groups and providing information on what uses are allowed (and where) is paramount to the success of the trails. Fortunately, all groups have a common goal of having trails that work.

Maps of each town, with physical trail gaps highlighted in red, are provided in the Appendix.

# FINDINGS

Through research and public feedback, UVLSRPC found there was a great deal of passion for area trails and scores of people engaged at the local level dedicated to these trails. UVLSRPC asked how people currently find out about trails, and the top answers were word of mouth, Facebook/social media, local bike shops, the Upper Valley Trails Alliance, and online resources such as Alltrails.com or Strava. However, most people used trails they were familiar with and did not always seek out new trails. When asked in public forums, people agreed that a lack of knowledge of trails outside of their regular habits prevented them from finding new places to recreate. People wanted to get out and explore but did not know where to get the information.

## Strengths

Public perception of the trails is positive, with people reporting friendly behavior among fellow trail users, remarking about the respect they have received from other users. People agreed that trail users were respectful of private property and the restrictions placed on the trails. Litter and trash did not seem to be an issue at most trails as people recognized that trails are an important asset to the community and function as good stewards. People also remarked that Sullivan County had an abundance of trails to explore, and that this project was exciting as it would hopefully direct more people to trails they have not yet explored. No matter what the user type or their recreational interest, all agreed that they want trails to work effectively.

- ✦ Friendly users
- ✦ Respectful of land
- ✦ Trails kept clean
- ✦ Lots of great trails to explore, with history and wildlife easily accessible
- ✦ Events on trails are popular

Some towns have great maps of their trails and can direct people to a short, easy to use trail that people can use before or after work for a quick walk. People also remarked on how much history was out on the trails, with old cellar holes, railroad events, and stone walls giving us a glimpse into the past. Wildlife was also reported to be in abundance in the region, and many people had their own stories of their encounters with wildlife such as deer, moose, woodchucks, ducks, predatory birds, turkeys, turtles, and more. Trail users also shared that they enjoyed trail-centered events such as trail races, rallies, etc. Trail runners have several organized runs throughout the year on area trails, and the trail group in Grantham has added events to engage more of the public.

## Opportunities

### *Signage and Parking*

While many people had praise for various aspects of the region's trails, there was plenty of feedback on ways to improve them. When asked what prevents people from exploring a new trail, two fundamental issues emerged: signage and parking. Unclear and inconsistent signage does not give unaccustomed users a clear direction of where to go or where it is safe to park. As trailheads can often just be on the side of a road, unclear parking directions make people wary of being able to leave their car. Trailheads themselves are not always obvious and some of them are down long dirt roads without clear markings. Combined with national news of violence against accidental trespassers, people are wary of looking for an unclear trailhead. Also noted was a lack of directionals to trailheads from the main roads – many trails were down a side road that could be easily signed to alert people to the presence of a recreational trail. Along with signage to get to the trail, once on the trail people commented that some trail intersections were not clearly marked with directionals.

### *Accessibility and Knowledge*

Accessibility was also an issue, as while some trails themselves were level and smooth, the parking area or the walk from the parking area to the trail was unsafe for elderly or others with mobility impairments. Users noted regional trails such as the Mascoma River Greenway in Lebanon that was designed with accessibility for all in mind. With the average age in New Hampshire expected to increase over the next decade, accessibility will be a key component going forward.

Other difficulties with trails had to do with knowledge about the trails – many people shared that they had lived in a town for years and had no idea about their own town's trails. The uses allowed on each trail are also unclear – hiking might be obvious, but what about mountain biking? Cross-country skiing? Are dogs allowed? A lack of consistent messaging around allowed trail uses prevents people from taking full advantage of the opportunities the region has to offer.

- ✦ Clear signage needed to the trail, at the trailhead, and along the trail
- ✦ Clear directions for parking
- ✦ More accessible trails needed for those with mobility issues
- ✦ Better promotion within towns of their own trails
- ✦ Better volunteer recruitment and engagement methods
- ✦ Maintenance from wildlife and weather-related incidents

## *Maintenance and Trail Management Group Volunteers*

Different uses on the trails, while often able to co-exist, still have some opportunities to better occupy the same trail. Off-Highway Recreational Vehicles (OHRVs) have a place on some trails, but their impact on the trails is much larger than most other uses. Developing OHRV-specific trails helps keep them in the correct area, but the challenge becomes their use on Class VI roads and other remote areas as maintenance becomes an issue.

Not only do OHRVs require more trail maintenance, but natural factors also play a role. Beaver dams have re-routed water over existing trails and should be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Along with wildlife, weather-related damage to trails has impacted trail management groups as they must deal with increased drainage issues due to flooding. As the climate develops and changes, we can expect Sullivan County to have more flash-flood events causing erosion damage and washouts. To circumnavigate waterways, trails have a variety of bridges built into the network. Bridges on trails are an unsung hero as they serve to protect sensitive habitats and safely transport people across a waterway or wetland. However, different trail uses need different types of bridges – snowmobilers need one kind, horseback riders need another, and hikers another still. One other note about bridges is that they can become quite expensive to build, and the more complex the use (snowmobile), the more expensive the bridge will be. Costs for trail infrastructure should include bridge construction and maintenance.

Lastly, all trail management groups reported the common theme of there being more need than available volunteers. Across all towns, the current network of people who are involved with trails is small and limited in their capacity. With only a few exceptions, each trail network has a small number of very dedicated volunteers who perform countless hours of service to the trail. However, without an infusion of new volunteers or younger people joining, this leads to burnout and overextension of people's energy. Some groups shared that they were able to work with some of the larger employers in the area (such as Hypertherm) that allow their employees paid volunteer hours, but these encounters were established through existing connections between the employer and the trail management group. The age of the people willing to volunteer is also an issue – they trend older and retired, so physical labor becomes an issue.

## **Gaps**

Notable gaps exist between existing trails and denser development with amenities such as food and gas. Gaps also exist between different trail systems where two trails might come close to each other, but there is no safe way to walk from one to the other. Walking or snowmobiling on the pavement should be kept to a minimum ( $\frac{1}{4}$  mi max) to keep users safe from vehicular traffic. Gaps also exist between modes of transit, such as between the Claremont Amtrak and any other mode of transportation to downtown

Claremont, save a rideshare or taxi. These gaps, when filled, can extend the breadth of the trail network, and allow more users to interact with new areas.

Gaps are not just physical – they can also exist between trail user groups. During the public forums, it was apparent that most people have one or two uses for the trails, and those are the only other type of people they engage with about trails. Snowmobilers and hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders, winter users and summer users – all these distinct groups lack a connection to one another, preventing cross-pollination of volunteer efforts and engagement.

It should also be noted that snowmobile trails are often winter-only – during the summer, the trail may be part of a hay field or other inaccessible feature. Lack of clarity on maps only compounds this issue.

#### Gaps Between:

- ✦ Winter users and summer users
- ✦ Motorized and non-motorized users
- ✦ Trails and Services
- ✦ User group to user group
- ✦ Trail network to trail network

## Threats to Trails

Sullivan County's trails have a wide array of threats to their existence, most of which have to do with the physical condition of the trail. As mentioned before, erosion from flash flooding and flooding from beaver dams are immediate threats to the existing trails. Incompatible uses such as OHRVs in sensitive areas or hiking on mountain-biking specific trails can cause damage to existing environments or clashes between users. One common encounter seems to be between snowmobilers and cross-country skiers existing in the same space at the same time but at drastically different speeds.

- ✦ Erosion from flash flooding and climate extremes
- ✦ Incompatible uses
- ✦ Landowner-trail user relationships/trail access
- ✦ Lack of funding

The other threat to trails has to do with access to the land the trail sits on. Over the past decade, real estate transactions have shown that more people from outside the area are buying property and are closing off trail access that the previous owner had provided for decades. New landowners aren't always aware of the history of the land or that New Hampshire has some of the strongest private landowner protections when land is opened for

recreational use. And while many people reported that trail users were respectful of private property rights, others shared stories from a nearby region where users assumed trail access meant access to all the land. This resulted in the landowner closing off all access to the land, including the trail, and a significant gap was created in their network.



This access is now likely lost for a generation as the current owner is unwilling to work with trail management groups in the area as the trust has been broken.

Lastly, one perennial threat to trails is funding. Almost all the funding for trails comes from volunteer-driven organizations or from small contributions within municipalities' budgets. There is very little direct state funding from New Hampshire for trails that are not on state-owned land. Snowmobile clubs do contract with the state to complete grooming on the trails, but the cost is shared between the snowmobile club and the state; additionally, much of the state funds for snowmobiles comes directly from snowmobile registration fees, not out of the General Fund. With outdoor recreation being a large driver of New Hampshire tourism, it would behoove the state to invest at the local level to preserve this natural resource.

## Class VI Roads

Class VI Roads are specific to New Hampshire's landscape. A Class VI road is generally a right-of-way that was once a regular thoroughfare, but over time the need for a road at this location has diminished and the town has officially relinquished most of its responsibilities for maintenance and upkeep. These roads are generally from the time before automobiles and served to connect farms with village centers. As land became conserved and travel patterns shifted, these roads were no longer needed for regular use.

Many of them are contained entirely on private property but the town still holds the right-of-way over the road. This has caused some conflicts between municipalities, private landowners, residents, and trail management groups.

A wide variety of issues have emerged from studying this topic through the lens of trail access. One is that municipalities are not always aware of, nor do they uphold their rights over Class VI roads, leading many to believe that the land is abandoned and part of the private parcel. Class VI road documentation is inconsistent from municipality to municipality. The public needs to have more information about where these are as Class VI roads allow public access. A minimum upkeep on these roads still must occur at a cost to the town – namely drainage ditches and culverts. Towns have limited budgets for Class VI roads, and they can improve them but not too much – they are limited to mitigating and managing water.

- ✦ Inconsistent documentation and knowledge about Class VI roads between municipalities
- ✦ Improvements performed by the town are limited
- ✦ Landowners need accurate information about Class VI roads
- ✦ Better communication between trail maintenance groups and landowners where Class VI roads serve as trails

Landowners need to have accurate, accessible information about the rights and responsibilities of having Class VI Roads on their land. Some landowners have gone to great personal expense to improve the roads, providing more maintenance than the town, so they may be hesitant to open access to the general public. As Class VI roads make for ready snowmobile trails and have been historically used for snowmobiling as long as there have been Class VI roads, access to these is crucial for snowmobile trail viability. Some landowners have improved the Class VI road into a driveway, preventing snowmobile use because the driveway is plowed and not groomed. This change in maintenance breaks the trail network and creates another gap. **As of this writing (Spring 2023), UNH and the NHDOT are working on a Class VI roads study across the state.**

## Municipalities' Roles in Trails

During public forums and via survey feedback, it was clear that some towns do an excellent job of providing access to trails, but many do not. Parking areas not cleared in winter or not maintained throughout the year was a common complaint, along with the aforementioned lack of signage. Several users brought up anecdotal evidence that towns did not always check driveway permits against Class VI road access or existing trails and have allowed private landowners to pave Class VI roads and restrict access. Another area that had agreement in public forums was that some communities are less welcoming than others when it comes to getting people involved with the trails – these towns ended up having a closed network of insiders who want to micromanage town properties or conservation land. Users who were interested in getting involved recounted stories of being rebuffed from these towns because they had new ideas or wanted to do more to promote the trails. While many towns have great interaction between the town offices/boards and trails, it was evident that many others did not.

- ✦ Better maintenance of trail access/parking lots
- ✦ Better consistency around Class VI roads
- ✦ Use trails as a positive public engagement method to reverse negative perceptions

## Snowmobile-Specific Findings

In conversations at public forums and through the information uncovered by the survey, it was determined that a public forum focused on the unique challenges snowmobilers face would be essential to capture this information. UVLSRPC Staff met with representatives from four different snowmobile clubs in Sullivan County to get their impressions of snowmobile trails in the region. With over 100 years of snowmobile experience between them, this group was able to provide historical insight and describe the changes they have seen over the past few decades.

### *Club Funding and Membership*

Most club funding is done at the local level through membership dues, fundraisers, and the generosity of local residents. Each club does receive a portion of the registration fees on snowmobiles, and they also receive trail grooming contracts from the state with an agreement to maintain the trail beds for snowmobile operation. Membership in these groups has historically been limited to only snowmobile operators, but unique arrangements in some local clubs have allowed an expansion of membership via non-motorized users who want to help preserve the trails for year-round use. Membership numbers should be examined, and plans should be established for the long-term vitality of these clubs based on current membership trends.

### *Perception*

Members of the public who do not regularly ride snowmobiles have a common misperception that snowmobile clubs are set for money because of the registration fees without realizing that registration fees, club dues, and local fundraising was the only source of income for these clubs. These are all volunteer-run, with some being able to pay for the grooming operator's time and labor. Many snowmobile clubs are run on a shoestring budget, using old equipment that requires upkeep and maintenance. Another notable finding was that there is very little interaction between snowmobile clubs and other users of trails. Snowmobile clubs have largely been exclusive to only those who snowmobile, even though these clubs did a large amount of maintenance, clearing, and upkeep to the trails in the summer months. A large gap in education and communication exists between these groups, and steps should be taken to connect them in order to organize not around a use of the trail, but the trail itself.

The other common misperception of snowmobilers is that towns and property owners think that snowmobilers will ruin the land/pollute the water/litter the trail. This is not accurate as all the clubs' guidelines promote the respectful, responsible use of the trail. Snowmobile groups also did recognize that they could do more to get out in front of the

## **Spotlight**

In Grantham, the local snowmobile club was approached by a dog sled musher about joining and contributing to the group since they also used the trails in the winter and benefitted from the work of the club. The snowmobile club took the next step to change their name to be a trails-focused club rather than a snowmobile-exclusive club – this better reflects the users of the trails in Grantham. This allowed non-motorized users to join and become engaged with the club, growing the volunteer network and community engagement. This has allowed for cross-group pollination and created new opportunities for trail engagement in Grantham such as trail rallies and races that involve the whole

community and share some community profiles to highlight partnerships or success stories, giving people a positive impression of snowmobile clubs before they could hear otherwise. Ideas like highlighting successful partnerships in local media and newsletters would help shape public opinion and hopefully encourage more landowners to allow recreational access on their property.

### *Climate Threats*

All snowmobile operators reported a drastic change in weather patterns over the past 20 years. More extreme weather events have become common – such as intense downpours causing flash flooding in hilly terrain, prevalent in lower Sullivan County in towns such as Acworth, Unity, and Charlestown. These flash floods cause erosion and can wipe out entire trails. Extreme weather patterns in the winter make for an unpredictable season – it can be boom or bust. When seasons have low-snow or no snow at all, it results in an increase in off-season maintenance resulting in more money being spent on navigating water, bridges, ditches, culverts, etc. Logging roads during deep snow are great for snowmobiles, but with little to no snow the logging trucks can continue to use it for access, cutting off snowmobiles from previously used trails. If weather patterns result in a late freeze or a series of freezing/thawing in the winter, the base layer of snow is not properly frozen and requires different equipment that can operate on thawed ground. Using existing equipment that was designed for deep snow is not nearly as efficient or effective as equipment that is designed to go over rocky, uneven terrain.

### *State of New Hampshire*

Several issues arose from discussions with snowmobilers about the relationship between the State of New Hampshire and the local snowmobile clubs. Some of these issues were about the direct steps the State has taken over the years that have affected the clubs, some are comparisons to neighboring states on their regulations, and some are on the intricacies of state funds being available to clubs.

Many snowmobilers have experience in the neighboring states of Vermont and Maine and can attest to the differences between the states. In Maine, snowmobiles are allowed to go on roads up to 500 yards to get to services while in New Hampshire, snowmobiles are not allowed to travel on roadways at all. Maine also allocates direct funding to snowmobile clubs and trails in their general budget whereas New Hampshire only transfers the registration fees to the clubs.

One policy change highlighted by snowmobile clubs was that the Department of Environmental Services (DES) permit for a trail no longer goes through the club but rather through the landowner. As the landowner may be out of state or does not want to have trails, it has served to close off large parcels of land that had previously been

accessible. By eliminating the snowmobile club from the conversation, they have lost their voice in the decision-making process.

The State of New Hampshire has touted outdoor recreation as a big draw for the state. According to a 2022 study by the US Department of Commerce – Bureau of Economic Analysis, winter activities contribute \$2.7 billion to the state representing 2.7% of the state's GDP and provide over 28,000 jobs with \$1.2 billion in wages.<sup>1</sup> According to a 2011 study funded by the New Hampshire Snowmobile Association, snowmobiling contributed over \$200 million in economic activity to the state at that time.<sup>2</sup> Winter activities, especially snowmobiling, contribute a great deal to the New Hampshire economy.

However, when compared to what the state of New Hampshire contributes to this economic impact, the numbers are inverted. The bulk of investment is sourced at the community level, not from the state. The state does contribute material costs for one project a year, but each club currently has 5-6 projects that should be immediately addressed for optimal trail maintenance. The State of New Hampshire also pays for 70% of the grooming operator's hours, but the rest must be made up by the club's member dues and fundraising. Grooming of trails is a necessity and must be done – clubs actively lose money when they groom but it is a necessary aspect of the sport. The state also has little flexibility in working with the needs of local clubs – due to limited member ability and volunteer numbers, sometimes it would be more effective to have the state loan heavy equipment and an operator for a day or two rather than current practice, which is to rely on volunteer labor to slowly work through a project. The same project that could take a few days with the right equipment could take an entire season with an all-volunteer crew. Even if this effort saves money for the state, there is no mechanism to change the current practice to best suit the needs of local trails.

### *Equipment/Materials*

The equipment needed to maintain a trail varies based on the season. In the winter, grooming machines are a necessity and currently, new machines are over \$250,000. The State of NH will pay 60% of this cost, but the other 40% (about \$100,000) must be raised by the local club. The longer they can extend the life of their equipment, the better for the fiscal viability of the clubs. However, even with a generous estimate of a 20-year lifespan for this equipment, this amounts to at least \$5,000 a year in fundraising just for a grooming machine that will not be purchased for years. As mentioned previously, different equipment is needed for warmer weather/low snow/rocky soil, requiring clubs to make difficult choices about equipment purchasing. Continuing to use

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<sup>1</sup> <https://apps.bea.gov/data/special-topics/orsa/summary-sheets/ORSA%20-%20New%20Hampshire.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://headwaterseconomics.org/trail/59-new-hampshire-snowmobiling/>

the existing grooming machine designed for deep snow while snow is light, and ground is exposed will result in a reduced lifespan for the grooming equipment.

### *Landowners*

Land changes hands often, and the last decade has seen an increase in transactions across the county. When land is sold, past practices are often forgotten or ignored. Some landowners are difficult or impossible to get ahold of, while others do engage actively with snowmobile clubs. However, with new property owners, clubs have found that the landowner may be amenable to the club but wants to impose new restrictions on the trail that make trail use extremely difficult. Some examples of this include limitations on hours to daytime only (trail grooming typically happens at night to maximize riding during the day), ask for the trail to be moved away from buildings to a more impractical part of the parcel where it would involve a large amount of work to blaze a new trail. This latter approach usually results in the snowmobile club giving up and leaving the parcel rather than trying to work on a new section of the trail. The landowner then sees this as a victory because the snowmobile group left on their own, but it was the new restrictions that really caused the club to abandon access. As mentioned previously, some landowners have parcels with Class VI roads through them. These have long been used as snowmobile trails, but some property owners have improved and paved the Class VI roads for use as private driveways. It is regularly plowed for driveway access rather than groomed for a snowmobile trail, preventing historical access for snowmobiles.

One factor that hampers the relationship between landowners and snowmobile clubs is the lack of knowledge about landowner protection. State of New Hampshire law covers landowners for \$2 million of liability insurance. If snowmobile clubs, municipalities, and the state of New Hampshire could better communicate this message, perhaps landowners would be more amenable to opening their land for recreation. Improving the relationship between landowners and snowmobile clubs is a worthwhile effort.

# ACTION PLAN

The action plan and proposed strategies developed out of the public forums and survey results, along with the research conducted for this project. First, we have listed immediate action items that responsible parties can undertake to best protect and promote trails in the county. Secondly, more detailed strategies highlight longer term goals and action items that will serve as a guide to future trail stewardship. These are organized around “Four Cs” that serve as pillars to guide future activities. Through Communication, Cooperation, Construction, and the Creation of Opportunities, Sullivan County can plot a smart path forward to best preserve and expand the trail network in the county.

Responsible Party	Suggested Activities
<b>Municipalities</b>	Activity 1.1. Become educated on their rights and responsibilities for trails and Class VI Roads
	Activity 1.2. Educate landowners on their rights, responsibilities, and protections for opening their land to public recreational access
	Activity 1.3. Look at identified gaps in their towns and work to close them, prioritizing connections between trails and services
	Activity 1.4. Participate in coordinated signage and trail tier designation
	Activity 1.5. Include trails in community Master Plans
	Activity 1.6. Join the newly organized Sullivan County Trails Council
<b>Trail Groups</b>	Activity 2.1. Develop methods to grow membership base from non-traditional members – i.e., snowmobile clubs opening membership to all users of trails
	Activity 2.2. Highlight and celebrate successful partnerships between landowners and trail groups
	Activity 2.3. Advocate for increased support for trail maintenance, upkeep, and expansion from state and local resources
	Activity 2.4. Increase public facing events to improve perception with the public, focus on growing membership within the municipality
	Activity 2.5. Participate in coordinated signage efforts and trail tier designation
	Activity 2.6. Join the newly organized Sullivan County Trails Council
<b>Trail Users</b>	Activity 3.1. Become engaged with your local trails group and find out ways to be involved
	Activity 3.2. Respect private land and work with landowners to open more areas for trails
	Activity 3.3. Participate in the Sullivan County Trails Council and stay informed

## Strategies, Solutions, Outcomes, and Responsible Parties

Category	Strategy	Focus Areas of Need	Possible Solutions	Measurable Outcomes	Responsible Parties
Communication	Improved Public Communication Methods	Trailheads, Parking Areas, Promotion of Trails, newsletters, public events	Work with trail maintenance groups to promote themselves, use technology such as QR codes on the trails to allow users to better connect with trail groups	Increase in public use of trails, increase in user engagement with trail management groups	Trail Management Groups (TMGs), Sullivan County
	Landowner communication	Education on landowner rights	Educational forums, a mailer for landowners that can be replicated across the county	More access to private land for trail use	TMGs, Sullivan County
	Municipal Communication	Resource management, municipal protection and rights	Educational forums for selectboards/conservation commissions, informational fliers	Increased engagement between municipalities and trail management groups	Municipalities, Sullivan County
	Improve signage	Signage both on and off the trail -- directing for trailheads, parking information, trail management information	Select a few trails as a pilot to develop uniform signage across the county and invest in signs	Improved information at trail sites, increased public engagement	Sullivan County, municipalities, TMGs



# Cooperation

Category	Strategy	Focus Areas of Need	Possible Solutions	Measurable Outcomes	Responsible Parties
Cooperation	Build bonds between motorized and non-motorized users	Organizing around the trail itself rather than by trail use. Snowmobile clubs can take the lead and incorporate new members	More communication between UVTA and snowmobile clubs, help with promotion and new initiatives to grow membership	Increase in non-motorized users joining a trail group	Snowmobile clubs, conservation commissions, municipalities, trail management groups
	Recruit new groups to volunteer on trails	Existing service organizations, schools, workplaces with volunteer hours available by employees	promotion of trails as a volunteer opportunity	Increased engagement with outside groups on trail work	Trail management groups, snowmobile clubs, conservation commissions, municipalities
	Unify the region through a Sullivan County Trails Council around the goal of high-quality trails in the region as a catalyst for conservation and economic development	Conservation Commissions that border each other, municipalities that border each other, trails that are close but have an identified gap; county-wide	Facilitate cross-group pollination and cooperation, build advocacy and organize efforts on a regional level	Creation of a Sullivan County Trails Council that can work together to coordinate efforts	Conservation commissions, municipalities, snowmobile clubs, Sullivan County, all user groups

# Construction

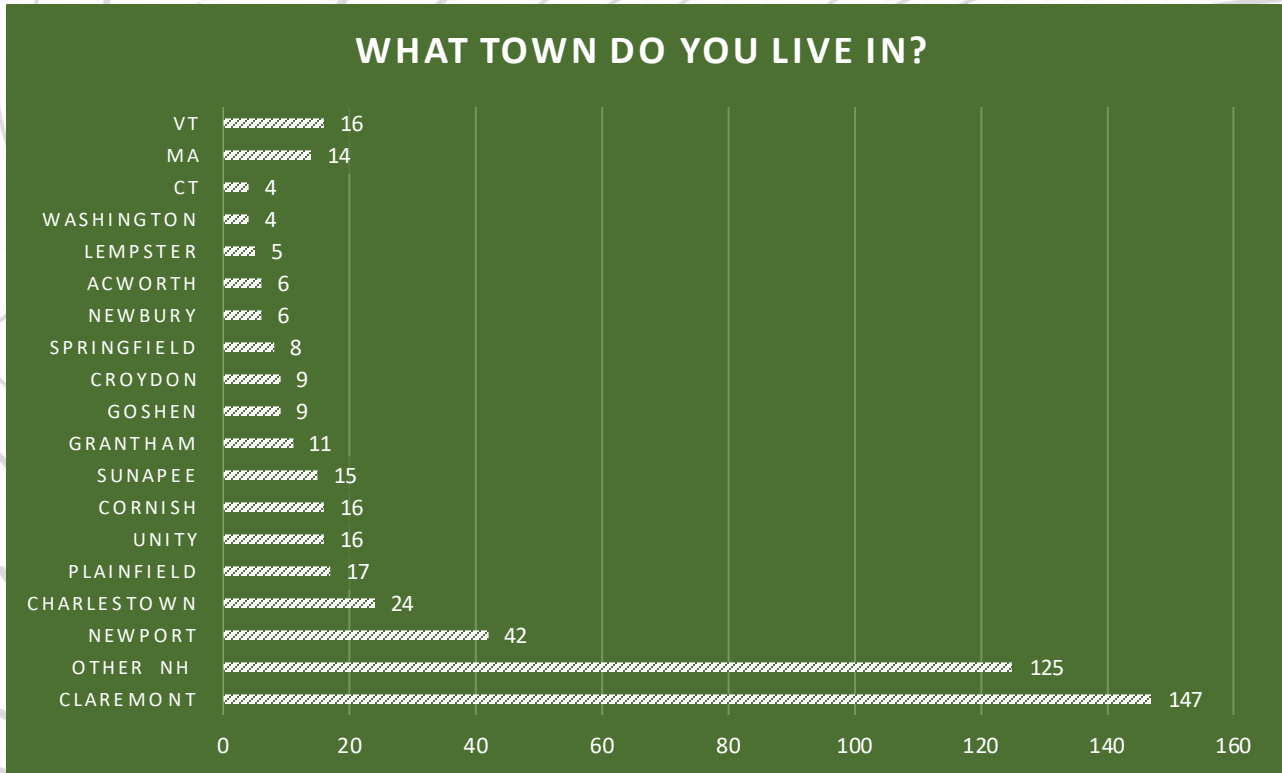
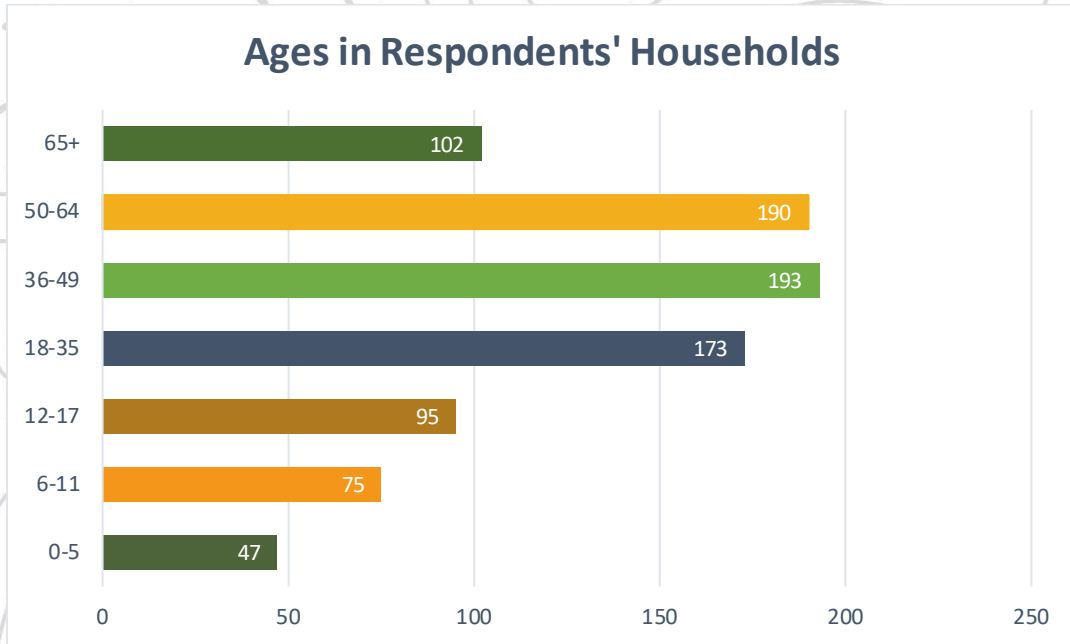
Category	Strategy	Focus Areas of Need	Possible Solutions	Measurable Outcomes	Responsible Parties
Construction	Maintenance of trails	Snowmobile clubs, trail management groups that are responsible for trail maintenance. Direct help on trail maintenance is needed	State provides heavier equipment to offset lower volunteer numbers, coordination of volunteer groups	Increase in direct assistance on trail maintenance	TMGs, snowmobile clubs, state of NH, Sullivan County
	Improvements	Currently TMGs can only maintain current trails, cannot expand trail networks due to funding and lack of volunteers	Apply for state and county grants to expand/improve specific sections, increase in state-provided equipment	Increased funding for trail expansion	TMGs, snowmobile clubs, Sullivan County, State of NH
	Gaps filled	Identified gaps between trail networks or between trails and services	Prioritize these connections to best serve the communities when identifying trails to expand	Gaps filled	TMGs, snowmobile clubs, Sullivan County

# Creating Opportunities

Category	Strategy	Focus Areas of Need	Possible Solutions	Measurable Outcomes	Responsible Parties
Creating Opportunities	Advocacy for increased state funding for trail networks	Trail networks are an important economic catalyst while also being direct land conservation, both identified by NH as vital for tourism	Advocate at the state level for increased funding to trail networks, coordination with Fish and Game, Bureau of Trails on solutions	Increased funding for trails from state of NH	All
	Municipal support for trails	With municipal support, more funding streams open for TMGs, and work can be done more efficiently	In-kind donations such as labor hours, equipment use, land ROWs, etc. (not necessarily cash) Take trails into consideration when working on infrastructure and connecting trails to services	Increased engagement between municipalities and their trails, filling of gaps	Municipalities
	Improve knowledge of and rights around Class VI roads	Class VI roads are a murky subject and knowledge varies from town-to-town. Landowners, municipalities, TMGs, and users all need to know the laws	Inventory and mapping of all Class VI roads in the county, consistent posting and signage, landowner communications, info sessions for landowners, municipalities, and residents	Increased education about Class VI roads, documentation and inventory/map completed, improved signage, standardized letter for municipalities to send to landowners	All

# APPENDIX

## Additional Survey Data



\* For this question, all answers for non-Sullivan County towns were combined by state.

## Trail Maintenance Groups Within Sullivan County

Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust  
Charlestown Conservation Commission  
City of Claremont  
Claremont Parks & Recreation  
Cornish Conservation Commission  
Cornish Town Forest Committee  
Eastman Recreation  
Grantham Conservation Commission  
Meriden Bird Club  
New Hampshire State Parks  
New London Conservation Commission

NH Bureau of Trails  
NH Fish and Game  
Plainfield Trailblazers  
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site  
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests  
Student Conservation Association  
Sullivan County ATV Club  
Sullivan County Natural Resources  
Town of Grantham  
Town of Newport  
Wantastiquet-Monadnock Trail Coalition

## Snowmobile Clubs

Blue Mountain Snow Dusters –  
Grantham  
Lake Sunapee Snowmobile Club –  
Sunapee, Newbury, Bradford  
Mascoma Valley Snow Travelers –  
Springfield, Wilmot, Grafton

Old 4 Rod, Gun & Snowmobile Club –  
Charlestown  
Shugah Valley Snow Riders – Claremont  
Tri-Town Trailblazers – Langdon,  
Alstead, Acworth  
Twin Ridge Mountaineers – Goshen  
Washington Snow Riders – Washington

## Directory of Known Posted Trails by Town, Uses

The following pages list the trail networks within Sullivan County as discovered through this Trails Plan process. It lists the name of the trail, the town(s) the trails are in, allowed uses, whether the trail should be listed in promotions, and a URL for more information on the trail itself.

Allowed uses are listed based on resources provided by the trail maintenance groups for each network. If any of these uses are listed in error, please contact UVLSRPC for correction.

Class VI roads and snowmobile-only trails are not generally listed on this matrix as Class VI roads contain a myriad of challenges for public access, and snowmobile-only trails can move from year-to-year and are best suited to be accessed through the snowmobile clubs.

Trails listed in the matrix below are approved for public access for the uses listed.

# SULLIVAN COUNTY TRAIL INVENTORY

Trail System Name	Towns	Allowed Uses	Published	Full Url
<b>Arrowhead</b>	Claremont (NH)	Hiking, Mountain Biking, Snowmobiling, OHRV, Ungroomed X-Skiing, Snowshoeing	No	<a href="https://www.claremonthnh.com/index.php?section=parks-and-facilities&amp;cas_cscid=1&amp;casid=80">https://www.claremonthnh.com/index.php?section=parks-and-facilities&amp;cas_cscid=1&amp;casid=80</a>
<b>Ashuelot River Headwaters Forest</b>	Lempster (NH)	Hiking, Snowmobiling, Ungroomed X-Skiing, Snowshoeing	No	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/ashuelot-river-headwaters-forest">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/ashuelot-river-headwaters-forest</a>
<b>Benson Town Forest: Cole Brook Trail</b>	Plainfield (NH)	Hiking, Mountain Biking	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/benson-town-forest-cole-brook-trail">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/benson-town-forest-cole-brook-trail</a>
<b>Cat Hole Trail Network</b>	Claremont (NH)	OHRV	No	<a href="https://www.riderplanet-usa.com/atv/trails/info/new_hampshire_16368/ride_597b.htm">https://www.riderplanet-usa.com/atv/trails/info/new_hampshire_16368/ride_597b.htm</a>
<b>Connecticut River State Forest Trail</b>	Charlestown (NH)	Hiking, Horseback Riding	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/connecticut-river-state-forest-trail">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/connecticut-river-state-forest-trail</a>
<b>Cornish Town Forest Trail Network</b>	Cornish (NH)	Hiking, Mountain Biking, Horseback Riding, Ungroomed X-Skiing, Snowshoeing	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/cornish-town-forest-network">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/cornish-town-forest-network</a>
<b>Daniels Mountain-Moon Ledge Loop</b>	Hinsdale (NH), Chesterfield (NH)		No	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/daniels-mountain">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/daniels-mountain</a>
<b>Eastman Cross Country Ski Trails</b>	Grantham (NH)	Groomed X-Skiing, Snowshoeing	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/eastman-cross-country-ski-trails">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/eastman-cross-country-ski-trails</a>
<b>Eastman's Northern Trails</b>	Enfield (NH), Grantham (NH)	Hiking, Ungroomed X-Skiing, Snowshoeing	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/eastman-northern-trails">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/eastman-northern-trails</a>
<b>Farnum Trails</b>	Plainfield (NH)	Hiking, Mountain Biking	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/farnum-trails">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/farnum-trails</a>
<b>French's Ledges Trails</b>	Plainfield (NH)	Hiking	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/french-s-ledges-trails">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/french-s-ledges-trails</a>
<b>Grantham Town Forest</b>	Grantham (NH)	Hiking, Mountain Biking, Ungroomed X-Skiing, Snowshoeing	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/grantham-town-forest">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/grantham-town-forest</a>
<b>Grantham's Sherwood Forest</b>	Grantham (NH)	Hiking, Ungroomed X-Skiing, Snowshoeing	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/granthams-sherwood-forest">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/granthams-sherwood-forest</a>
<b>Great Meadow Trail</b>	Charlestown (NH)	Hiking	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/great-meadow-trail">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/great-meadow-trail</a>
<b>Gunnison Lake / Ruth LeClair Trail</b>	Goshen (NH)	Hiking, Snowshoeing	No	<a href="http://www.team-pinnacle.org/media/maps/Webb_Forest.pdf">http://www.team-pinnacle.org/media/maps/Webb_Forest.pdf</a>

<b>Halls Pond Trail</b>	Acworth (NH), Charlestown (NH)	Hiking, Horseback Riding	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/halls-pond-trail">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/halls-pond-trail</a>
<b>Heath Forest Trails</b>	Grantham (NH)	Hiking, Snowshoeing	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/heath-forest-trails">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/heath-forest-trails</a>
<b>Helen Woodruff Smith Bird Sanctuary</b>	Plainfield (NH)	Hiking, Mountain Biking	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/helen-woodruff-smith-bird-sanctuary">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/helen-woodruff-smith-bird-sanctuary</a>
<b>Hubbard Hill State Forest Trail</b>	Charlestown (NH)	Hiking, Mountain Biking, Horseback Riding	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/hubbard-hill-state-forest-trail">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/hubbard-hill-state-forest-trail</a>
<b>John's Glen Trails - Hiking</b>	Grantham (NH)	Hiking	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/johns-glen-trails">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/johns-glen-trails</a>
<b>Kidder-Morgan Trails</b>	Springfield (NH), New London (NH)	Hiking, Snowshoeing	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/kidder-morgan-trails">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/kidder-morgan-trails</a>
<b>Lake Trails Group</b>	Grantham (NH)	Hiking, Ungroomed X- Skiing	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/lake-trails-group">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/lake-trails-group</a>
<b>Lipfert Forest</b>	Claremont (NH), Cornish (NH)	Hiking, Mountain Biking, Horseback Riding, Ungroomed X-Skiing	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/lipfert-forest">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/lipfert-forest</a>
<b>Moody Park</b>	Claremont (NH)	Hiking, Mountain Biking	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/moody-park">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/moody-park</a>
<b>Mount Sunapee State Park</b>	Goshen (NH), Newbury (NH)	Hiking, Snowshoeing	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/mount-sunapee-state-park">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/mount-sunapee-state-park</a>
<b>Mount Tug area in Claremont/Newport</b>	Claremont (NH)			<a href="https://trailsnh.com/hike/n/357728417/Mt-Tug#trail-map">https://trailsnh.com/hike/n/357728417/Mt-Tug#trail-map</a>
<b>Nature Trail - Charlestown</b>	Charlestown (NH)	Hiking	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/nature-trail-charlestown">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/nature-trail-charlestown</a>
<b>Newport Town Forest (The Pinnacle)</b>	Newport (NH)	Mountain Biking	No	<a href="http://www.newportrec.com/gfs/media/pdfs/pinnacle20200522.pdf">http://www.newportrec.com/gfs/media/pdfs/pinnacle20200522.pdf</a>
<b>Pillsbury State Park</b>	Washington (NH)	Hiking, Mountain Biking, Snowshoeing	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/pillsbury-state-park">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/pillsbury-state-park</a>
<b>Reservoir Lot Trails</b>	Charlestown (NH)	Hiking, Mountain Biking, Horseback Riding	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/reservoir-lot-trails">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/reservoir-lot-trails</a>
<b>Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site</b>	Cornish (NH)	Hiking	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/saint-gaudens-national-historic-site">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/saint-gaudens-national-historic-site</a>
<b>Sawyer Brook Headwaters</b>	Grantham (NH)	Hiking, Mountain Biking, Horseback Riding, Snowmobiling, OHRV, Ungroomed X-Skiing, Dogsled, Snowshoeing	No	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/sawyer-brook-headwaters">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/sawyer-brook-headwaters</a>



<b>Student Conservation Association Trails</b>	Charlestown (NH)	Hiking	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/student-conservation-association-trails">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/student-conservation-association-trails</a>
<b>Sugar River Recreational Rail Trail (Motor Trails)</b>	Claremont (NH), Newport (NH)	Horseback Riding, Snowmobiling, OHRV	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/sugar-river-recreational-rail-trail">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/sugar-river-recreational-rail-trail</a>
<b>Sugar River Recreational Rail Trail</b>	Claremont (NH), Newport (NH)	Hiking, Mountain Biking, Horseback Riding, Snowmobiling, OHRV, Ungroomed X-Skiing, Dogsled, Snowshoeing	No	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/sugar-river-recreational-rail-trail-2">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/sugar-river-recreational-rail-trail-2</a>
<b>Sunapee Ragged Kearsarge Greenway (New London-Wilmot Section)</b>	New London (NH), Wilmot (NH), Springfield (NH)	Hiking, Snowshoeing	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/sunapee-ragged-kearsarge-greenway-new-london-section">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/sunapee-ragged-kearsarge-greenway-new-london-section</a>
<b>Unity Mountain Trail</b>	Unity (NH)	Hiking	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/unity-mountain-trail">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/unity-mountain-trail</a>
<b>Victor Hewes Memorial Park Nature Trail</b>	Plainfield (NH)	Hiking, Mountain Biking	Yes	<a href="http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/victor-hewes-memorial-park-nature-trail">http://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/victor-hewes-memorial-park-nature-trail</a>
<b>Webb Forest Preserve</b>	Sunapee (NH)	Hiking, Snowshoeing	No	<a href="https://www.ausbonsargent.org/properties/webb-forest-preserve">https://www.ausbonsargent.org/properties/webb-forest-preserve</a>

## Maps of Trail Gaps by Town

The following pages are maps of each town in Sullivan County with known existing trails highlighted based on the source. Red lines or circles indicate areas that towns should focus efforts on to close the gaps between trails and services or trails and other trail networks.

Each gap has been identified using GIS software and parcel numbers are available upon request if towns would like to begin outreach to landowners whose properties sit along the identified gap.

These maps are not an end-result determination of trail expansion; rather they should serve as a first step guide for municipalities that seek to address gaps in their trail networks.

### Map Key

Each map has trails color-coded according to source material. Sources included Upper Valley Trails Alliance, State of NH DOT, and self-reported trails from trail managers. The trails are **not** color coded by use type with the exception for snowmobile trails.

**Green:** Green trails are general trails that were self-reported or from UVTA. Labeled as “Sullivan County Trails” to indicate the trail information was produced locally.

**Orange:** Orange trails are snowmobile trails as provided by NHDOT. As snowmobile trails can move and change in places from season to season depending on landowner access, these are a snapshot in time from 2023. The most up-to-date snowmobile trails maps can be accessed through each club.

**Black:** Black trails are Class VI roads as determined by NHDOT. As discussed above, Class VI roads are a complex situation and while access is allowed, users should be aware that Class VI roads cut through private property and not all landowners or municipalities are aware of the rights and responsibilities surrounding Class VI roads.

**Yellow:** The one yellow trail is the Bobby Woodman Rail Trail in the city of Claremont. This was separated out because of its unique properties as a rail trail in this section.