**Vermont Trails System Eligibility Criteria & Application Process**

The Vermont Trail System was established in [Chapter 20 of Title 10: Conservation and Development](https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/fullchapter/10/020) of the Vermont Statutes. The statement of purpose for Chapter 20 reads: “In order to provide access to the use and enjoyment of the outdoor areas of Vermont, to conserve and use the natural resources of this state for healthful and recreational purposes, and to provide transportation from one place to another, it is declared to be the policy of this state to provide the means for maintaining and improving a network of trails to be known as the "Vermont trails system."

**Eligibility/Criteria:**

In order to become part of the Vermont Trails System, trail organizations which own or manage the subject trails, must meet the following criteria:

1. The applicant, which can be a non-profit, public or private entity, manages trails for public, recreational use within the boundaries of the state of Vermont.
2. Applicants to the Vermont Trails System must have obtained written landowner permission, or a legally binding agreement, from private landowners (10 VSA Section 444) for public use and to maintain the trail, or, in the case of publicly owned lands, a letter of support from the relevant public agency responsible for managing the lands in question.
3. Applicants should be members of the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council.
4. The applicant must state who is responsible for managing and maintaining their trail(s) and all future trails and explain the long-term maintenance plan for the trail (i.e., labor, materials, timeline, how it will be funded.)
5. The trail(s) and all future trails managed by the organization shall be consistent with statewide goals, objectives or priorities identified in the Vermont Trails and Greenways Plan.
6. The trail(s) and all future trails managed by the organization must adhere to water quality and environmental standards as defined in Appendix A. The applicant must provide information on the formal design and maintenance standards which are or will be used by the managing organization.
7. The trail(s) and all future trails must have local, regional or statewide significance and must provide a linkage to other trails in an area to add further significance to a trail. When feasible, the trail(s) must connect to a regional or statewide trail or be part of a regional network of trails. Trails connecting schools, community centers and/or recreation areas are also eligible.
8. The applicant must provide evidence of public support for the organization’s ability to manage trails to the Vermont Trail System standards with at least two letters of support.
9. The applicant must describe how their trail(s) and all future trails will further the education, safety awareness and/or environmental stewardship of public users of the trail.
10. A detailed map and GIS shapefiles of all trails currently managed by the organization must accompany the application to the Vermont Trails System.
11. If an organization which has been recognized as part of the Vermont Trail System adds a new trail(s) to its trail network, it shall provide a detailed map and GIS shapefiles of the new trail(s) to the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council and confirm that the new trail meets the eligibility criteria above.

**VTS Incentives**

* An award certificate and/or logo for signage/recognition;
* Recognition at an awards ceremony with the Commissioner, Governor, or VT Trails and Greenways Council (VT&GC);
* Inclusion on [the list of VTS trails](https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/partners-and-resources/vermont-trail-system) through the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation website
* Promotion through the VT&GC;
* [Act 250 Rule 71](https://nrb.vermont.gov/sites/nrb/files/documents/2015%20Adopted%20Rules.pdf): Trails that are part of a network that has been designated as part of the Vermont Trails System are treated as public projects and the public purpose test for jurisdiction (ten acres of disturbed land) applies, regardless of whether the trail is located on public or private land.
* Being part of a larger system of trails that is vital to the recreation, transportation, quality of life and economy of the state.

**Review Committee**

The Commissioner of the VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) shall appoint a four-member review committee (one FPR representative & three VT&GC members recommended by the VT&GC) to assure representation as follows: One motorized representative, one non-motorized representative, one multi-use representative, and one FPR representative. This committee will be familiar with the Vermont Trail System application process and review criteria in order to provide a comprehensive review of VTS applications. Members shall serve a two-year renewable term. The VT&GC shall recommend new members to the Commissioner of FPR as needed.

**Application Process**

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. The committee will first review applications and may hold a meeting where applicants are invited to present information about their trail. Additional VT&GC members may be invited to attend the meeting as deemed appropriate. The committee's recommendations will be forwarded to FPR’s Commissioner for review and approval. Any additional information needed will be recycled back through the review committee and applicants. Following the committee review process, the Commissioner will reply to the applicants (and send copies to the review committee) with his/her decision.

Successful applicants to the Vermont Trails System will be recognized at one of the VT&GC’s quarterly meetings, an annual meeting, or at a special event (i.e., National Trails Day, Vermont Trails Symposium, or the Governor’s Conference on Recreation).

**Maintaining Members to the Listing**

Members of the Vermont Trails System will be asked to complete a confirmation form approximately every 5 years for the VT&GC and FPR to evaluate the continued eligibility of the trail being a part of the VT Trail System. The re-evaluation process will also confirm continued landowner permission as well as any pertinent updates (i.e., changes in trail use, surface, alignment, trailside amenities, trailhead facilities, linkages, signage, etc.).

Existing Trail System members who do not submit a confirmation form by the date determined may be found to be ineligible. Once a trail is no longer eligible, it will be removed from the listing at the discretion of the Commissioner and/or upon the recommendation of the VT&GC.

**Application to the Vermont Trails System**

***Please submit completed applications to Jessica Savage, Recreation Program Manager (***[***jessica.savage@vermont.gov***](mailto:jessica.savage@vermont.gov)***)***

**Trail System Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Trail Location (city(ies)/town(s), county(ies): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Starting & End Points (include longitude & latitude of each point):**

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**Length of trail (miles):**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate the primary use for which the trail will be constructed and maintained:**

\_\_ Hiking \_\_ Equestrian \_\_ Snowmobiling

\_\_ Running/Walking \_\_ Cross Country Skiing \_\_ Off Highway Vehicles

\_\_ Biking \_\_ Snowshoeing \_\_ Education/Interpretive

\_\_ Accessible Access \_\_ Water Trail \_\_ Multi-Use: \_\_

\_\_ In-line Skating \_\_ Community Rec. Path \_\_ Other: \_\_

**Please mark all trail uses that apply:**

\_\_ Hiking \_\_ Equestrian \_\_ Snowmobiling

\_\_ Running/Walking \_\_ Cross Country Skiing \_\_ Off Highway Vehicles

\_\_ Biking \_\_ Snowshoeing \_\_ Education/Interpretive

\_\_ Accessible Access \_\_ Water Trail \_\_ Multi-Use: \_\_

\_\_ In-line Skating \_\_ Community Rec. Path \_\_ Other: \_\_

**Trail Description:**

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If trail work has been under development, please provide us with the date of final completion:

**Please tell us how this trail and trail manager is complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Architectural Barriers Act. The latest information about public accessibility guidelines for outdoor developed public recreation areas including trails is found on the Access Board’s website:** [**http://www.access-board.gov/outdoor/index**](http://www.access-board.gov/outdoor/index)**.htm**

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**Land Ownership (Please check all that applies):**

* Trail Crosses Private Land (owned by a private landowner or non-profit organization) with written permission for public access and trail maintenance
* Trail Crosses Privately Owned Land with Public Easement
* Trail Crosses Public Land (owned by a public entity)

*Please note: Applicants must receive and retain written permission from private landowners. See certification statement below*

To aid in the application review process please answer the following questions briefly and legibly on a separate piece of paper.

1. **Please describe how this trail is consistent with the statewide goals, objectives or priorities identified in the Vermont Trails and Greenways Plan** (see [SCORP – Statewide Comprehensive Recreation Plan](https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Recreation/Recreation_Grants/Library/Vermont_SCORP_12_23%20-%20Split%20Pages%20-%20Edge%20to%20Edge.pdf))
2. **Explain the trail's local, regional or statewide significance, including transportation alternatives or purposes.**
3. **To what extent does the trail presently provide linkage (or lead to future linkage) to other trails, bicycle-pedestrian paths, community and downtown areas, scenic corridors, or other natural, cultural, historical and recreational areas?**
4. **What degree of public support is evident for this trail? Please provide at least two letters of support which directly address your organization’s qualifications for becoming a Vermont Trail System member.**
5. **Who is responsible for managing and maintaining the trail? Please describe the managing entity’s long-term maintenance plan for this trail. (Labor, materials, timeline and how it will be funded.)**
6. **Please provide the standards which your organization uses to build and maintain your trail(s). These standards must, at a minimum, address water quality issues, as well as environmental, natural and cultural resource concerns. See Appendix A for further guidance.**
7. **Please describe how the trail will further the education, safety awareness and/or environmental stewardship of public users of the trail.**
8. **Please list any other considerations that may aid in the application review process.**

**Maps**

Please include a detailed map of your trail along with any descriptive literature. Please use color topographical maps whenever possible. Maps should be clearly labeled and show GPS coordinates. Be sure your map is clear enough to locate the trail or trailhead and to navigate the trail itself.

**I certify that the above information is true and valid and the necessary permissions from all landowners to use and maintain this trail have been retained, in accordance with Title 10: Conservation and Development Chapter 020: Vermont Trails System Section 444.**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Authorized Representative’s Signature Date**

**Contact Information:**

Applicant’s Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Email \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Trail Managing Organization

(if different from above)

\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Appendix A: Acceptable Water Quality and Environmental Guidelines for the Vermont Trail System**

Trail organizations which manage trails selected for membership in the Vermont Trail System must demonstrate that they adhere to strict construction and maintenance standards which address water quality, environmental, natural and cultural resource concerns. The organization must present their adopted standards at the time of application. For examples of acceptable and recommended standards, please refer below to the primary use(s) for which your trail(s) are intended. If your organization has adopted a different standard, please provide specific information to the selection committee including manuals, websites, or other applicable materials.

At a minimum, all Vermont Trail System members’ must meet the water quality standards found in the **Acceptable Management Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont** (publication available at <https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Forest_and_Forestry/Forest_Management/Library/FullDocument-7.29.pdf>)

**Acceptable trail standards include:**

*Revised August 29, 2019*

**Guidelines for Multiples Uses:**

United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) Trail Construction

& Maintenance Notebook: 2007 Edition. <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications/07232806/toc.cfm>

USFS Trail Fundamentals and Trail Management Objectives. 2011. USFS. <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/trail-management/trail-fundamentals/Fundamentals_Trng_Pkg_05_01_2011.pdf>

Appalachian Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance, 2nd edition, 2000.

Trail Planning, Design & Development Guidelines.2007. MN DNR, Trails & Waterways Div., St.Paul, MN. <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/publications/trails_waterways/tgmanual/index.html>

**Hiking/Running/Pedestrian Trails**

The Federal Highway Administration’s Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook - 2007 Edition (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications/07232806/index.cfm>)

Trail Fundamentals and Trail Management Objectives. 2011. USFS. <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/trail-management/trail-fundamentals/Fundamentals_Trng_Pkg_05_01_2011.pdf>

Wetland Trail Design and Construction. <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications/01232833/toc.cfm>

**Mountain Bike Trails:**

International Mountain Bike Association's (IMBA's) Trail Solutions: IMBA's Guide to Building

Sweet Singletrack: https://imba.com/resource/trail-solutions

Best management practices in mountain bike trail construction using International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) guidelines, with resources available online: <http://www.imba.com/resources>

International Mountain Bike Association's (IMBA's) Trail Solutions: IMBA's Guide to Building

Sweet Singletrack: <https://imba.com/resource/trail-solutions>

National Park Service, Guide to Sustainable Mountain Trails: Trail Assessment, Planning, and Design Sketchbook, September 2007. <http://www.nps.gov/dsc/docs/GuideToSustainableMountainTrails_2007.pdf>

**Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trails:**

ATV/OHV Trail guidelines: *NOHVCC's Great Trails Guidelines*

Management Guidelines for Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation. 2006. Tom M. Crimmins in association with the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council <http://nohvcc.org/docs/miscellaneous-files/ohvguidelines.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

Best Management Practices for Erosion Control During Trail Maintenance and Construction. Vermont All-Terrain Vehicle Sportsman’s Association. [www.vtvasa.org](file:///C:\Users\sherryw\Downloads\www.vtvasa.org)

**Snowmobile Trails:**

VAST Trail Policy Manual:

<https://vtvast.org/Forms/2019/Trail%20Policy%20Manual%206-26-18.pdf>

VAST Guide for the Development of Snowmobile Trails: <https://vtvast.org/Forms/2020/Trails%20Manual2019.pdf>

Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Signing Placement:

<https://vtvast.org/Forms/2020/Guidelines%20for%20Snowmobile%20Trail%20Signing%20&%20Placement%20FY19.pdf>

International Association of Snowmobile Administrators (IASA) Resources:

<https://www.snowiasa.org/guidelines-resources/>

**Cross-Country and Back-Country Ski Trails:**

Trail Fundamentals and Trail Management Objectives. 2011. USFS. <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/trail-management/trail-fundamentals/Fundamentals_Trng_Pkg_05_01_2011.pdf>

Catamount Trail Association Chief Handbook

<http://catamounttrail.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/TrailChiefHandbookUpdatedNOV2016.pdf>

Cross-Country Back-Country Ski Trail Etiquette:

<https://catamounttrail.org/ski-the-ct/trail-etiquette/>

**Equestrian Trails:**

Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads and Campgrounds. December 2007. US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications/07232816/index.cfm>

Recreational Horse Trails in Rural and Wildland Areas: Design, Construction, and Maintenance by [Dr. Gene W. Wood](http://www.americantrails.org/resources/wildlife/genewoodwild.html), Professor Emeritus, Clemson University

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities:**

Vermont Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities. 2002. VTRANS. <http://vtransengineering.vermont.gov/sites/aot_program_development/files/documents/ltf/PedestrianandBicycleFacilityDesignManual.pdf>

AASHTO, Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 3rd Edition, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Washington, DC; 888-227-4860, [www.aashto.org](file:///C:\Users\sherryw\Downloads\www.aashto.org), 1999.

**Waterway and Wetland Trails:**

Best Management Practices for Duck Blinds, Fences, Catwalks and Docks. Vermont Wetlands Division <http://www.vtwaterquality.org/wetlands/docs/wl_catwalk_bmp.pdf>.

Wetland Trail Design and Construction. 2001. USDA Forest Service Publication. <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications/01232833/toc.cfm>

Logical Lasting Launches: Design Guidance for Canoe and Kayak Launches. 2004. National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program. <http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/helpfultools/launchguide.pdf>

Developing Water Trails in Iowa. Revised 2010. Iowa DNR. <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Recreation/CanoeingKayaking/WaterTrailDevelopmentTools/WaterTrailsToolkit.aspx>

USFS Standard Trail Plans & Specifications:

<https://www.fs.fed.us/managing-land/trails/trailmanagement-tools/trailplans>

**Accessibility**

Guidelines found in the Accessibility Guidebook on Outdoor Recreation & Trails online at:

<https://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility/pubs/pdfpubs/pdf12232806/pdf1223280>

[6Pdpi300.pdf](https://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility/pubs/pdfpubs/pdf12232806/pdf1223280)

For Adaptive Mountain Bike (aMTB) Trails: Trail Information and Rating Systems

Adaptive Trails (US based rating and trail reviews) <https://adaptivetrails.com/ratings>

Break the Boundary (Based in Australia) <https://breaktheboundary.com>

**Other:**

A long list of FHWA resources, guidance and manuals can be found at:

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/manuals.cfm>

American Trails is the leading national clearinghouse for trail information and provides additional professional resources: <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/accessible/index.html>