



New Hampshire

## Meet the Mastermind Behind the Granite State's New Cross-State Adventure Trail

BY LAURA STARK

With a panoply of backdrops and a grab bag of surfaces—including crushed stone, hard-packed dirt, cinder, ballast, grass and even paved road—travelers on the Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail ([crossnewhampshire.org](http://crossnewhampshire.org)) are sure to experience many delights and challenges along the way, but never, ever boredom. “Adventure” is right there in the name, though less experienced riders or families can choose sections of the 83-mile route between Woodsville, New Hampshire, and Bethel, Maine, that aren’t as intense. New Hampshire resident and mastermind behind the trail, Marianne Borowski, noted, “You need to have a bit of a sense of humor in some places.”

Borowski, a retired biochemist, drew inspiration from New Hampshire’s neighbor, Vermont, and its 91-mile cross-state route that now ties into this one. By combining the two, the truly intrepid can travel a whopping 174 miles. Having experienced the Cross Vermont Trail ([crossvermont.org](http://crossvermont.org)), she asked its organizers if anyone was working on continuing a trail from where their route ended at the Connecticut River, into New Hampshire and across the Granite State. Upon hearing that no one was, Borowski jumped in wheels first.

“I think the route compares very well with some of the nicest scenery that I’ve seen on routes all around the country,” she enthused. “We have mountains, we have babbling brooks and rocky rivers, moose and bears, wildflowers and lupine fields, spectacular fall foliage—all these great things that a lot of people don’t see because they don’t head up that far north. I think it’s a gem, and by putting this route together, what I’ve seen already are people saying, ‘I might go ride that for a long weekend.’”

Borowski has received positive feedback from dozens of enthusiastic riders who have explored the new trail. Although the route is stitched together with some sec-

tions on backcountry roads (and a small fraction on busy roads), Borowski aimed to incorporate as much off-road trail as possible. With lots of bicycling experience—both on-road and off-road—she prefers the latter, stating, “There’s something about being on a recreation path or a rail-trail that I just find great because I can look around, I can relax, I can chat with someone riding next to me and not always be looking in my rearview mirror wondering if the cars are seeing me and worrying about the traffic.”

Stretching across the state’s North Country region, the journey from the Vermont border to just over the Maine line includes two rail-trails: the Presidential Rail Trail ([friendsofthepresidentialrailtrail.org](http://friendsofthepresidentialrailtrail.org)), tucked into the picturesque Presidential Range of the White Mountains, and the Ammonoosuc Rail Trail ([rtc.li/ammonoosuc-rail-trail](http://rtc.li/ammonoosuc-rail-trail)), which parallels its lushly forested namesake river. Both add an equestrian option to the adventure, as well as cross-country skiing and snowmobiling in the winter.

So far, just a few signs are up marking the Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail—and more are coming—but, in the meantime, those interested in checking out the route can visit the trail’s website, which has been up and running for only about two years, to find detailed cue sheets and maps.

As its one-woman champion, the project has been a true labor of love for Borowski, and she is thrilled to see the idea catching on. “The town of Lisbon is very supportive of this; they thought it was a good idea because they see where bicycling brings in tourism and it would be good for the local businesses,” she shared. “It’s a little town, but it’s a perfect place to grab a lunch and sit down in the park by the river. To see that they were excited about this cross-state trail going through their town really felt good to me. They get it!”

PHOTOS: (Left) Marianne Borowski; (right) the Presidential Rail-Trail is part of the cross-state route.

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MARIANNE BOROWSKI ON THE CROSS NEW HAMPSHIRE ADVENTURE TRAIL



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