



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

MONADNOCK REGION RAIL TRAIL COLLABORATIVE

Information compiled by Mike Kowalczyk | mike@monadnockrailtrails.org | January 2026



Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative's (MRRTC) mission is to transform the Monadnock region rail trail network to one that is suitable for year-round use by all permitted user types. The MRRTC convenes rail trail advocates and volunteers, provides technical assistance with project planning and coordination, and advocates for greater awareness of the many local and regional benefits to improving rail trails.

The accomplishments within this annual report were due to efforts of many individuals and organizations. The MRRTC's level of each project involvement ranged from full engagement to no involvement and everything in-between. This report is an attempt to compile all the rail trail work completed in 2025 into one summary.

A letter from the President

To Our Valued Funders, Volunteers, and Community Partners,

On behalf of the Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative (MRRTC), I am proud to share our 2025 Annual Report. This document is more than a summary of projects—it’s a celebration of what’s possible when community, public institutions, and private generosity, come together to build something enduring.

In 2025, over 1,000 volunteer hours supported improvements across 40 miles of rail trail, spanning 10 towns and four rail trails. From the redecking of bridges and restoring trail surfaces to successful public events and expansion of funding, we’re making real progress toward a year-round, multi-use regional rail trail system.

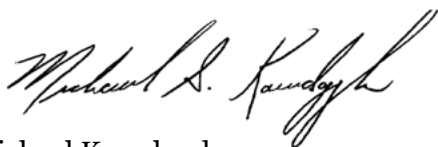
Your support makes this possible.

In the following pages, you’ll find the tangible results of your generosity—and a vision for 2026 that’s equally ambitious. From trail rehabilitation in Fitzwilliam and Swanzey to the running of the 2nd annual Rail Trail Challenge, every project aligns with our mission: to connect communities, promote outdoor access, and stimulate local economies through a high- quality rail trail infrastructure.

We invite you to explore this report not just as a retrospective, but as an invitation. Whether you are a funder, partner, business, individual donor, or volunteer, your continued investment is vital to turning vision into reality.

Thank you for believing in the rail trails and the communities they serve.

With appreciation,



Michael Kowalczyk
President, Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative
mike@monadnockrailtrails.org
MonadnockRailTrails.org



2025 AT A GLANCE...

- 40 Miles of trail improved
- 10 Towns served
- 4 Rail Trails
- 6 Bridges
- Over 1000 Volunteer Hours logged



The MRRTC board is:

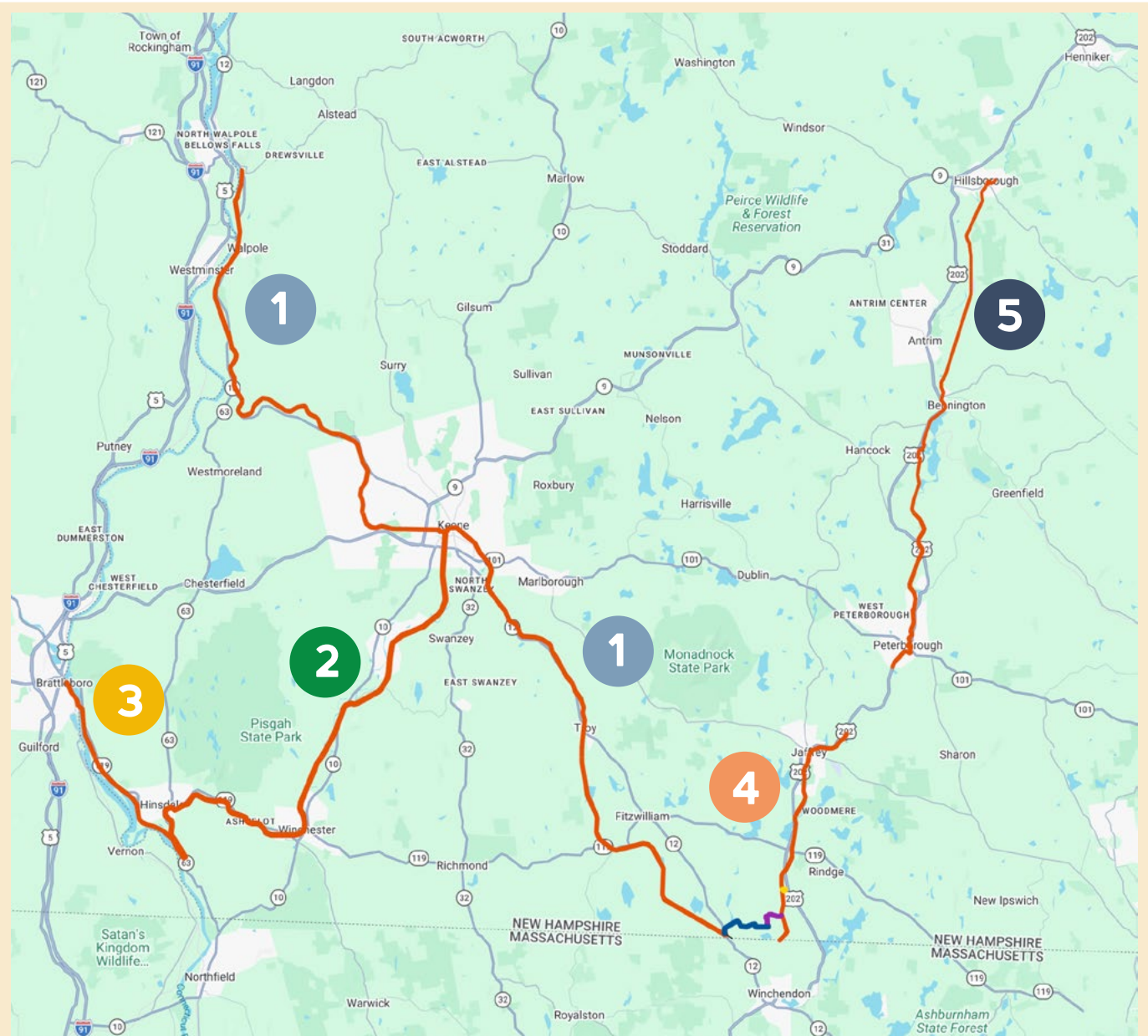
Mike Kowalski, *President*
Bob Meissner, *Vice President*
Rich Pendelton, *Treasurer*
Henry Underwood, *Secretary*
Suzanne Bansley, *Board Member*
Jeremy Evan, *Board Member*
John Hayes, *Board Member*

Contents

President's Letter...	3
Monadnock Region Rail Trails...	5
Grant Activity...	6
Work Plans...	7
Project: Rail Trail Challenge...	8
Project: Trail Map...	10
Community Projects & Plans...	11
Donors & Volunteers...	17

Our Trail Network

Please reference **our new trail map** at www.swrpc.org/rail-trail-map for the full trail network and details on shorter segments and connector trails.



Monadnock Region Rail Trails: The Big Five

1 Cheshire Rail Trail, 41.1 miles

2 Asheulot Rail Trail, 21.2 miles

3 Fort Hill Rail Trail, 7 miles

4 Monadnock Rail Trail, 7.5 miles

5 Hillsborough Rail Trail, 8 miles

2025 Grant Activity

\$100,000

State of NH Recreational Trails Program* for rehab of Cheshire Rail Trail from **Westmoreland-Surry** line to **Walpole** line. Written in 2023, awarded in 2024, and project completed between Aug 2024 and Aug 2025. *Written and sponsored by Cheshire County.*

\$100,000

State of NH Recreational Trails Program* for rehab of Cheshire Rail Trail through town of **Marlborough**. Written in 2023, awarded in 2024, and project completed between Aug 2024 and Aug 2025. *Written by Cheshire County and sponsored by Town of Marlborough.*

\$100,000

State of NH Recreational Trails Program* for rehab of Cheshire Rail Trail through town of **Troy**. Written in 2024, awarded and project completed in 2025. *Written and sponsored by Cheshire County.*

\$100,000

State of NH Recreational Trails Program* for rehab of Cheshire Rail Trail through town of **Fitzwilliam**. Written and awarded in 2025, project expected to be completed in 2026. *Written and sponsored by Cheshire County.*

\$100,000

State of NH Recreational Trails Program* for rehab of Cheshire Rail Trail from Swanzey/Keene line to the **Swanzey/Marlborough** line. Written in 2024, awarded and project completed in 2025. *Written and sponsored by Cheshire County.*

\$9,350

American Trails Capacity Program for Cheshire Rail Trail **North-Northwest Keene** Maintenance. Written, awarded, and project completed in 2025. *Written and sponsored by Cheshire County.*

2026 Grant Plans

\$100,000

State of NH Recreational Trails Program* for trail maintenance equipment purchase for **Sno-Moles**. To be written in 2026 and if awarded, to be implemented in 2027. *To be written by Cheshire County and sponsored by the Sno-Moles.*

\$100,000

State of NH Recreational Trails Program* for rehab of the Ashuelot Rail Trail running through **Westport Village, Swanzey**. To be written in 2026 and if awarded, to be implemented in 2027. *To be written and sponsored by Town of Swanzey*

\$100,000

State of NH Recreational Trails Program* for rehab of a trail segment to be determined. To be written in 2026 and if awarded, to be implemented in 2027. *To be written and sponsored by Cheshire County.*

\$100,000

State of NH Recreational Trails Program* for rehab of Fort Hill Rail Trail in **Hinsdale**. To be written in 2026 and if awarded, to be implemented in 2027. *To be written and sponsored by Town of Hinsdale.*

*Each RTP award of \$100,000 is a combination of \$80,000 in from the state and \$20,000 (20%) provided by the grantee.



2026 Work Plans

Project Implementation

- Cheshire Rail Trail – Fitzwilliam, *NH RTP funded*
- Ashuelot Rail Trail – Westport Village, Swanzey, *Rail Trail Advisory Group funded*
- Ashuelot Rail Trail – Swanzey; Bridge Installation near Pine St, *NHDOT/Swanzey funded*
- Ashuelot Rail Trail – Swanzey, Flashing Crossing installation, *MAST funded*
- Regular maintenance throughout the region: mowing, culvert clearing, remove fallen trees

Private Fund Raising

- Cheshire Rail Trail – Keene, Swanzey Factory Road Bridge
- Kiosk materials

Other Activities

- Signage design and installation
- Refine ArcGIS for railroad valuation and project definition
- Kiosk location identification, map design and installation

Pursue Funding

- Fort Hill Rail Trail Maintenance – Hinsdale, *NH RTP*
- Tractor/Brush Hog/Side Mower – Sno-Moles, *NH RTP*
- Cheshire Rail Trail – Westmoreland,
- Cheshire Rail Trail/Monadnock Rail Trail Connector, *NH RTP*
- Monadnock Rail Trail – Jaffrey, *RTP*

Monadnock Rail Trail Challenge

In 2026 we plan to repeat the challenge similar to 2025 with updated rewards and improved marketing.



Project Highlight



Rail Trail Challenge

With marketing and financial support from the Great Monadnock Collaborative, 2025 was the first year for the Monadnock Rail Trail Challenge. The challenge invited rail trail enthusiasts to embark on a self-paced adventure across the scenic Monadnock rail trail network using any method of travel—whether biking, hiking, running, or horseback riding. Participants had until December 31st to complete their journey, encouraging exploration at your own pace while embracing the great outdoors.

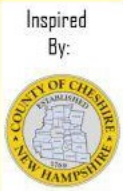
Every check-in at a participating local businesses marks a milestone on the adventure and earns reward points. These points not only track your progress but also unlock access to an exclusive rewards store, where redeemer can claim exciting prizes.



Monadnock Rail Trail Challenge



How it Works:
Register
Bike, Walk, or Run the Rail Trails
Visit each Sponsored Businesses
Be Rewarded Upon Completion



Rail Trail Challenge

Check In Businesses

Thank you to participating locations!

Westmoreland

Barn and Thistle
784 Route 63, Westmoreland, NH
Jingles Christmas Shop
1024 NH-12, Westmoreland, NH
Stuart & John's Sugar House
31 Route 63, Westmoreland, NH
Summit Winery
719 NH-12, Westmoreland, NH

Keene

Beeze Tees Screen Printing
117 Main St, Keene, NH
Bulldog Design
147 Winchester St, Keene, NH
Stonewall Farm
242 Chesterfield Rd, Keene, NH
Ted's Shoe & Sport
94 Main St, Keene, NH
Madame Sherri's
82 Main St, Keene, NH
Shadow and Soul Emporium & Tea Lounge
20 Main St, Keene, NH
Yellow Bell Café
45 Main St, Keene, NH
Frisky Cow Gelato
80 Krif Rd, Keene, NH
Modestman Brewing
100 Main St, Keene, NH

Swanzey

Ashuelot River Campground
152 Pine St, Swanzey, NH
The Bridges Inn at Whitcomb House
27 Main St, Swanzey, NH

Hinsdale

A1 Pizza and Grill
987 Brattleboro Rd, Hinsdale, NH
Bacon Me Crazy
6 Main St, Hinsdale, NH
TNT Fireworks Supercenter
963 Brattleboro Rd, Hinsdale, NH

Walpole

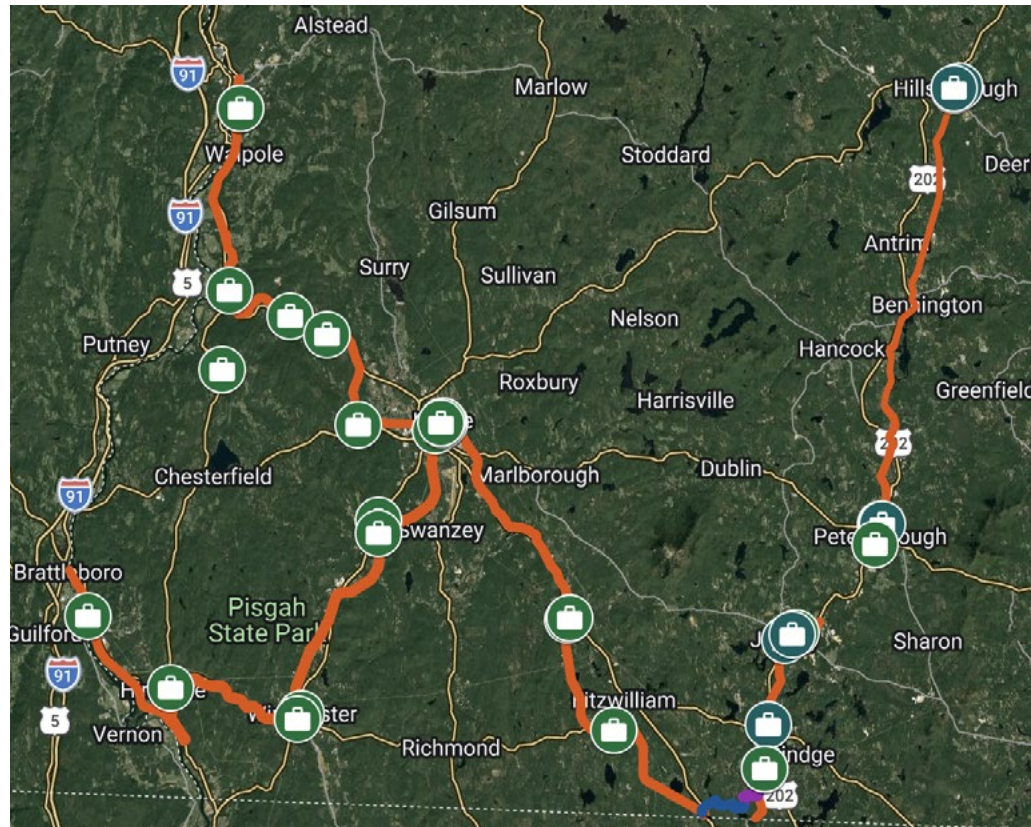
Diamond Pizza
417 Main St, Walpole, NH
The Hungry Diner
9 Edwards Ln, Walpole, NH

Hillsborough

The Village Art Café
17 W Main St, Hillsborough, NH
Taco Beyondo
53 Henniker St, Hillsborough, NH
The Ice Cream Bar
5 W Main St, Suite B, Hillsborough, NH

Peterborough

The Monadnock Center for History and Culture
19 Grove St, Peterborough, NH
Aesop's Tables & Events
12 Depot St, Peterborough, NH



Troy

Troy B&M Railroad Depot
Water St, Troy, NH
Troy Deli and Marketplace
33 Central Square, Troy, NH

Jaffrey

Jaffrey Pizza Barn
6 Blake St, Jaffrey, NH
Monadnock Country Café
80 Peterborough St, Jaffrey, NH

Fitzwilliam

Historic Fitzwilliam Passenger Rail Depot,
Fitzwilliam, NH

Rindge

Emma's 321 Pub & Kitchen
377 US-202, Rindge, NH
Sandwich Master
19 Sonja Dr, Rindge, NH
Phoenix Smokehouse
242 US-202, Rindge, NH

Project Highlight

Monadnock Region/ Keene Rail Trail Map

Outdoor enthusiasts, walkers, runners, and cyclists have a new way to explore the region's scenic pathways with the release of the Monadnock Region/Keene Rail Trail Map. Available both in print and available for download, the map highlights almost 100 miles of converted rail corridors that now serve as accessible, year-round trails for recreation and transportation.

The map features Southwest NH, including all of Cheshire County and the eastern part of Hillsborough County as well as neighboring communities in Massachusetts and Vermont. The City of Keene is featured in detail. The map covers rail trails owned by the State of New Hampshire, such as the Cheshire Rail Trail as well as locally or privately managed rail trails. Designed for locals and visitors, each side offers detailed route information, access points, and connections to other trail systems. The map also features information about trail surface condition, parking locations, distances and a variety of other information like other recreational trails, permitted users (for State-owned sections), and more.

The collaboration between five local organizations to complete the map of the region's rail trails was no small feat. The work was made possible through the contributions of many organizations and individuals from start to finish. The idea to create a new printed map of the region's rail trails first came about in 2024 when the City set out to develop an updated map for kiosks around the City. Pathways for Keene saw an



opportunity to expand this vision. A 2002 map of rail trails and bike routes produced by Pathways for Keene needed an update and was limited to Cheshire County. After connecting with Southwest Region Planning Commission, the Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative and the Monadnock Conservancy, representatives of the five organizations regularly met to sketch out a new map which would feature both a greater amount of detail and larger area compared to previous efforts.

The printed map is available in Keene at Norm's Ski and Bike Shop Alpine Bike Works and the Greater Monadnock Collaborative regional chamber of commerce.

The online version can be accessed at the SWRPC website: www.swrpc.org/rail-trail-map or the QR code to the right. Browse at home, take it with you on your phone, or to your favorite printer.



2025 Work Highlights

Cheshire Rail Trail in Troy: before and after



Sno-moles bridge work



Marlborough Surfacing: before and after



Trail Progress Fitzwilliam

Trail: Cheshire Rail Trail

Length: 9.3 mi

Partners: Monadnock Sno-Moles, NHBOT

Funders: NHSA Raffle, Motorcycle poker run

Volunteers: Sno-Moles members. Many volunteer hours

2025 Activities

- The **SnoMoles** performed much trail maintenance in the form of surface mowing, tree removal, ledge removal.

2026 Plans

- Via an RTP grant secured by Cheshire County to rehab ~4.0 miles will be rehabilitated.
- Surface mowing and tree removal by the **SnoMoles**



Pictures provided by Chris Silvia & Tony Pilat

Trail Progress Hinsdale

Trail: Fort Hill & Ashuelot Rail Trail

Length: 12 mi

Partners: Pisgah Mountain TrailRiders, NHBOT

Funders: Holt Fund

Volunteers: Hundreds of volunteer hours and several pieces of volunteer equipment

2025 Activities

- Mowing and tree remove by **Pisgah Mt TrailRiders**

2026 Plans

- **Town of Hinsdale** to apply for the RTP grant to rehabilitate the Fort Hill Rail Trail. If awarded, construction would occur in 2027.
- **MRRTC** to apply for the Grant-in-Aid grant to remove trees and canopy mow the Fort Hill Rail Trail
- Mowing



Picture provided by Buck Rogers

Trail Progress

Jaffrey

Trail: Monadnock Rail Trail **Length:** 7 mi

Partners: Sno-Moles,
Town of Jaffrey, NHBOT

Volunteers/Donors: Belletetes,
The Sno-Moles, Seppala Construction,
Marc Tieger, and Apollo Steel



2025 Activities

- The **Sno-Moles** snowmobile club has been diligent in cutting back brush, removing protruding roots, mowing, and filling in soft spots. Bridges are in good shape as is signage.
- The **MRRTC** and **Town of Jaffrey** installed four benches

2026 Plans

- Mow
- Apply for an RTP grant to rehabilitate the Monadnock Rail Trail from Webster St to Hadley Rd. This will be phase 1 of a multi-phase plan expected to take 3 years to complete.
- Relocate benches and affix appreciation plaque.
- Seek to raise \$10,000 to purchase a rickshaw-type e-bike to transport 2 passengers with limited mobility on the trail



Picture provided by Bob Meissner

Trail Progress

Keene (Northwest)

Trail: Cheshire **Length:** 1.5 mi

Partners: Cheshire County,
American Trails, Keene
SnoRiders, NHBOT

Funders:
American Trails,
GIA grant

2025 Activities

- Tree removal, mowing, ditch clearing, culvert resetting, culvert clearing, and culvert installation by **Cheshire County**, **Keene SnoRiders**, **MRRTC**
- **Cheshire County**, **Keene SnoRiders**, **MRRTC** together raised the bridge through the granite cut in Surry to prevent debris build up and flooding
- **MRRTC** Removed the wear strips off the bridge just south of the Keene landfill

2027 Plans

- **Keene SnoRiders** to apply new wear strips to the bridge just south of the Keene recycle center



Picture provided by Mary & Mark Peterbars

Trail Progress Marlborough

Trail: Cheshire Rail Trail

Length: 2.3 mi

Partners: Cheshire County,
Town of Marlborough, Luke-
man Excavation, NHBOT

Funders:
Recreational Trails
Program Grant

2025 Activities

- Tree removal, mowing, ditch clearing, culvert resetting, culvert clearing, and culvert installation rom the Marlborough/Swanzey town line to the Marlborough/Troy town line.
- Applied hard pack material, graded, and rolled by the **Town of Marlborough, MRRTC, Lukeman Excavation.**

2026 Plans

- Mowing



Pictures provided by Mary & Mark Peterburs

Trail Progress Rindge

Trail: Monadnock Rail Trail

Length: 5.4 mi

Partners:
Monadnock Sno-Moles,
202 Trucking & Equipment,
NHBOT

Funders:
NHSA Raffle,
Motorcycle poker
run

Volunteers:

Many volunteer hours

2025 Activities

- Canopy and surface mowing, tree cleaning, surface grading, and trash removal by the **SnoMoles**
- Installation of a bench by the **Town of Jaffrey** and **MRRTC**

2026 Plans

- Mow
- Apply for RTP grant to enhance the Monadnock Rail Trail to Cheshire Rail Trail connector trail.
- **Sno-Moles** plan to redeck the bridge south of West Main St
- Relocate a bench and affix appreciation plaque.



Pictures provided by Tony Pilat & Chris Silvia

Trail Progress

Surry

Trail: Cheshire Rail Trail

Length: 2.3 mi

Partners:

Keene SnoRiders, NHBOT

Funders:

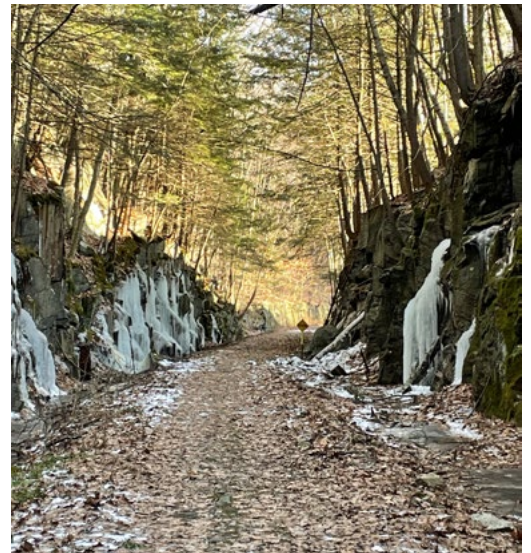
American Trails

2025 Activities

- Mowed by volunteers
- Installed a couple of culverts to better manage the water in the cut

2026 Plans

- Mow, remove fallen trees, remove leaves
- Add signage



Pictures provided by Mary & Mark Peterburs

Trail Progress

Swanzy

Trail: Ashuelot & Cheshire Rail Trails

Length: 7 miles & 3.5 miles

Partners:

Town of Swanzy, Cheshire County, Keene SnoRiders, NHBOT

Funders:

The Swanzy Rail Trail Advisory Committee, NHBOT RTP Grant, NHBOT GIA

2025 Activities

- Mowing done by volunteers
- Major work on the Cheshire RT was done by the **Swanzy Dept. of Public Works**. Leaves removed, fill applied where appropriated, organic material removed, hardpack applied
- Washouts on the Ashuelot Rail Trail fixed by **Keene SnoRiders** and NHBOT GIA grant
- Added detour sign to guide users around the remaining washouts with help of **Swanzy Public Works**
- Fixed three rusted culverts on Ashuelot RT with help of **Swanzy Public Works**

2026 Plans

- Cheshire Rail Trail: Mow, remove fallen trees, remove leaves and add signage
- Ashuelot Rail Trail: Mow, remove fallen trees, remove leaves. Fix washout near the Eversource substation. Clear ditches, apply hardpack material from the south Holbrook Rd crossing to RT10. New deck, wear strips, and handrails on Ash Swamp Brook bridge.



Pictures provided by Mary & Mark Peterburs

Trail Progress

Troy

Trail: Cheshire Rail Trail

Length: 3.9 mi

Partners: Kim Chaffe, Troy Depot Day Coordinator, SnoMoles, Holman Contracting & Landscape Materials, Cheshire County, NHBOT

Funders: Troy Conservation Commission, NHBOT RTP Grant, NHBOT GIA Grant

Volunteers: SnoMoles Members

2025 Activities

- Major trail work completed from the Marlborough town line to the Troy Depot (2.0 miles). Work included tree removal, mowing, ditch clearing, culvert clearing and fixing, apply fill material, applying hardpack material by **Holman Contracting, Cheshire County, the SnoMoles, MRRTC.**
- Redecked two bridges near Lawerance Rd, Troy. Many thanks to the **SnoMoles, NHBOT, and Troy Conservation Commission.**

2026 Plans

- Mow and remove fallen trees
- Install signage
- Install a kiosk near the Troy Depot



Pictures provided by Jennifer Robinson

Trail Progress

Westmoreland

Trail: Cheshire Rail Trail

Length: 7.5 mi

Partners: Cheshire County, Westmoreland Snobelers, Pat Rawson Construction, NHBOT

Funders: Recreational Trail Program, GIA grant

Volunteers: Hundreds of volunteer hours and several pieces of volunteer equipment

2025 Activities

- Completed the RTP project which included tree removal, canopy mowing, ditch clearing, culvert clearing, adding a culvert, grading, adding surface material. Done by **Cheshire County, Westmoreland Snobelers, Pat Rawson Construction, MRRTC.**
- Trail mowed twice by the **Westmoreland Sno Belters**
- The **Sno Belters** painted the picnic table located a little west of Mt Gilboa
- The **Sno Belters** added wear strips on the bridge just south of Aldrich Rd to prevent bike tires from getting caught between wear strips.
- The **Town of Westmoreland** created a trail committee to manage future projects and maintenance

2026 Plans

- Apply trail surface material where appropriate
- Grade and roll



Pictures provided by Tony Pilat & Chris Silvia

Improving the region's rail trail network requires many skills and talents such as project planning, mapping, permitting, artifact identification, grant writing, fundraising, project management, and equipment operation. Many volunteer hours are needed. If not for the numerous people and organizations volunteering their time and equipment, the rail trails would not be as accessible as they are today.

*I would like to thank the following
for generously offering their time and/or equipment:*

202 Trucking and Equipment
Bruce Clement
Cheshire County
City of Keene
Greater Monadnock Collaborative,
Holman Contracting
JDK Pavement LLC
Jeff Watson
Keene SnoRiders
Lukeman Excavation LLC
Mark & Mary Peterburs
Monadnock Sno-Moles
MRRTC Board
NH Bureau of Trails
NH Department of Transportation
NHRTC

Pathways For Keene
Pisgah Mountain Trailriders
Senator Donovan Fenton
Southwest Region Planning Commission
Town of Jaffrey
Town of Marlborough
Town of Peterborough
Town of Swanzey
Troy Conservation Committee
Walpole Trail Committee and their volunteers
Westmoreland Sno Belters
Winchester Trailriders

*A big thank you goes out to MRRTC 2025 donors.
It is the generosity of our donors that keeps the
organization running and trail projects successful.*

American Trails
C&S Wholesale Grocers
Edward & Deborah Madigan
Gene Friedman
Greater Monadnock Collaborative
Hutter Construction
Karen Countryman
Marilyn Griska

Microspec Corporation
M&T Bank
NH Horse Council
Richard Cowan
Sage Wheeler
Savings Bank of Walpole
Tom & Lisa Mignaulet

