NEMBA, the New England Mountain Bike Association, is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to promoting trail access, maintaining trails open for mountain bicyclists, and educating mountain bicyclists to use these trails sensitively and responsibly.

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Riding in the Age of COVID-19

Here are some tips for staying safe while getting out and having fun.

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SingleTracks

Hey, get creative! We welcome submissions, photos and artwork. This is your magazine. Be nice, and share!

On the Cover: Brett Severson taking on the features at Grayville Falls in Colchester, CT. Photo by Tina Severson.

Do you have a photo that would make a good cover shot? Email it to office@nemba.org

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*Bike brands vary by location*
Riding in the Age of COVID-19

By Paula Burton

Here we are in 2020 living in the age of COVID. But, except for a few folks up in northern Maine and Vermont who may still be in mud season spring has arrived! Pandemic not withstanding in most places, mountain bikers can get out and enjoy the trails. In CT a few of the state parks have had rolling closures due to parking and congestion issues, but most of our local riding places are open. Last week, the sun was shining, and temperature was creeping up to 80 degrees. Who would not want to get outside? Who, well, suddenly, it seemed like everyone decided to experience trails.

Around New England Pandemic counts are trending down, and states are beginning to reopen other facilities. Fortunately for most of us, our local trails have remained open for socially distanced recreation. Of course, as the Pandemic progresses things may be different by the time you’re reading this.

My favorite places to ride are quite busy on weekends and at the golden hours of 2pm to 4pm. I’ve found that early morning rides and week-day rides have plenty to offer, and fewer crowds. I have been exploring different areas and trails that are new to me. It is the spirit of early mountain biking to explore trails. The double tracks, the old school hiking trails, even the dead-end trails, whatever is out there, including even the hike-a bike sections and bushwhacks that are short. Hopefully very short! I know, I know, maybe not for everyone! But it’s a great way to inspect new territory. Of course, I only go where mountain biking is not prohibited.

NEMBA’s 28 chapters are still here and doing work behind the scenes. Zoom chapter meetings are not the same as going for a ride, and then hanging out at the brewery. But they are important, fun and a great opportunity to give your input and stay in touch with your friends. Keeping your NEMBA membership up to date is helps too and provides your chapter with needed funds. Now is also a perfect time to reach out to your local land managers and give them a much-needed word of thanks. A quick thank you email would go a long way. After all land managers and park agencies could have taken the easy way out and just closed everything.

Mountain bikers love trails. I know I do. And now it seems, so does everyone else! Since we are the designers, the builders, the users, the advocates, and stewards of the trails we ride, we need to welcome these new folks into our midst. My chapter’s volunteers have worked on their own in communication with land managers to continue trail maintenance. A new trail was opened. A relatively new rider saw the open trail and honestly thought it just appeared overnight. This was a well-planned trail that took almost two years to fully open. A few minutes of talk and education explained everything and drew a newer rider into the fold. But, we kept our social distance and pulled our buffs up over our mouths while gathered at the trail junction. In another park a boardwalk connection was completed.

There are many newbies out in the woods. The mountain biking community and these new riders and hikers need to get the message. Gentle education is the key to informing them how to recreate in multi-use parks and trails and how to share outdoor spaces.

We can be the ambassadors for trails and introduce our next wave of advocates and stewards to the places we know best. A smile (might
be tough if wearing a mask—but smile anyway and let it show through your eyes). A kind word, or a point in the right direction back to the parking lot demonstrates to the world that we care about the places we recreate in. Right now, our rides may not be as fast as we would like. We may have to stop frequently for other trail users. Or when we see a packed parking lot, we may have to drive up the street to another trail that isn’t our favorite, but all these actions will help keep our trails open through this difficult time.

It will be tempting to get sloppy with our social distancing and trail etiquette as the days get warmer and longer. That beer in the parking lot with our riding buds may seem normal, but other trail users may see it as not following social distancing rules, so when done with your ride, say a quick goodbye and leave.

We are setting an example for everyone else. We know the value of these trails. We’ve fought hard for the right to use them. We’ve built them with meetings, and sweat, and endless conversations in our own community. Now is the time to spread that knowledge, be shining examples of trail advocates and users, and preserve our access by welcoming folks. That person who is not familiar with trail etiquette could be your next NEMBA member or maybe that person is on the conservation commission or maybe it’s your neighbor who had no interest in trails but who becomes a great maintainer and advocate for trails. And whether the person is on wheels or not, we need them in our continued efforts for trail access and preservation. And when this is over, let’s hope that everyone has gained a deeper appreciation for what a trail means to us all.
The trails closures at Kingdom Trails came as a shock to us all. It should serve as a lesson to us that our usage of the trails is contingent upon our fitting into the overall trail community.

Now with Covid-19 magnifying the number of people out on the trails it’s even more important that we make trail courtesy our highest priority.

There are a lot of new riders out on the trails. Pandemic restrictions have left people with few recreational opportunities other than to get out onto our public lands. It is crowded out there, especially in parking areas.

Many of the newer riders out on the trails are unfamiliar with the behavioral norms that the rest of us understand. For those of us who might have forgotten and for any new riders reading this it’s a good time for a review.

Since the earliest days of mountain biking, about 42 years ago, we’ve always been thought of as disruptive. We’ve always had an uphill struggle to get access to the trails. That’s due to our speed and silentness out on the trails. Just like us, hikers and equestrians tend to exist in their own little worlds when they’re out on the trails. They don’t like to be disturbed or startled. In the case of equestrians there’s a real danger of spooking their horses.

The best way for us to be welcomed members of the trail community has always been to fit in. And now that’s more important than ever.

When you see others out on the trails – be friendly. Say “Hi!” or “What a great day to be outside” to everyone you see.

When approaching from their rear, slow to their speed and say, “Hi There!”, before you get too close. When approaching from the front, stop and let them go by, often times people will step out of your way. But if not, wait a sec and be friendly. Compliment their dogs, say “Hi!” to their kids, but most of all be happy to see them. They are there for the same reasons that you are.

With equestrians be especially careful. When approaching from the front, stop, get off your bike and let them pass. Talk to them! When a horse hears a human voice, they know that you’re not a threat. If approaching from the rear, be aware that the horse will hear you long before the human does. So, start talking early and keep chattering until the rider becomes aware of you. Then ask them if it’s okay to pass. Again, often they will pull off the trail and let you by. But sometimes they may ask you to follow them to the next intersection. Keep talking!

Slow down when you can’t see around a corner, especially on downhills, you’ll probably be going too fast to stop quickly if there’s a family with kids, or a hiker with earphones just around the next turn.

This Pandemic gives us an opportunity that we’ve never enjoyed before. There are a lot more people out in the woods. If we make a good impression on them, we cement ourselves into the trail community. If we don’t, we could lose access to some of our favorite riding areas.

I would like to end this cautionary screed on a positive note. All those new mountain bikers, especially the families that you see out riding for the first time may become the future of our sport. Welcome them, help them out if they look lost. Sell NEMBA and sell responsible mountain biking and we’ll ensure that our sport continues to have a bright and growing future.

Have Fun and stay safe. Happy Trails.
NEMBA Awards $40,000 for Signature Trail Grants Funding

Sandwich, MA The Cape Cod NEMBA chapter will be constructing a Maple Swamp Viewing Platform and Shared-use trails. The viewing platform will have a picnic table and the shared-use trails will access the “overlook” at Sam Nye’s mountain. The project will include clean up in the area to remove stumps, sticks and make the area a “destination” point and must-visit landmark in the Maple Swamp system. A licensed arborist will collaborate on vista pruning to create an amazing view.

Kennebec County, ME The Central Maine NEMBA chapter will build a climbing trail in the Kennebec Highlands. An intermediate 1 – 1.25 mile climbing trail will be built in the Kennebec Highlands, one of the largest tracts of land with the most wilderness-feel in Central Maine. This trail will add needed mileage to the existing trail network, create a larger loop that connects to two other trails, and give more options to riders for how they will experience The Highlands.

Wyman Township and Carrabassett Valley, ME The Carrabassett Region NEMBA chapter will be working on the Stoney Brook Trail System. The chapter will coordinate construction of a non-motorized trail network in Wyman Township and Carrabassett Valley, known as the Stoney Brook Trails. The project will include 12 to 15 miles of new user-specific trail, trail head, and parking access. Trails will be constructed for all abilities, in a stacked loop configuration, and built to the highest level of sustainability possible.

Burlington, CT Northwest CT NEMBA will work on the Johnnycake Mountain Trails. They will create a sustainable network of top-notch mountain bike specific trails that will re-open access to this parcel of land, expanding the existing network, and provide access to future connections with local commerce centers and a planned municipal park. Working in conjunction with the Town of Burlington, additional parking areas are also slated to be constructed to provide additional access points to our expansive trail network. In addition to the construction of the new trails, a vital part of the project is to eradicate less desirable, unsustainable, and illegally constructed trails remaining from the past.

Dedham, ME “Endo Trail” Trailhead Connector Trail by Penobscot Region NEMBA. This project will connect the newly constructed segments of Overlook trail directly to the network trailhead. The project will bypass eroded and deteriorating rake-and-ride trails to double the mileage of sustainably built singletrack within the network and add a beginner-friendly offering to a network that currently only has intermediate and advanced trails.
Located just over the Cromwell line in Rocky Hill and opening of the Dividend Pond trail system. The biggest news since last issue is the completion of all chapter work has come from solitary effort. The winter brought mercurial weather to the Central CT area with the mercury tending to register temps above freezing. Conditions were not ideal for mountain biking with some of the most popular areas closed or open on limited hours. As always, thanks to everyone who acted responsibly and obeyed the closures. And as I write this in early May, we’re under the yoke of the Covid-19 pandemic and the soft shutdown brought on by it. Connecticut has been hit especially hard by the virus. The “bike business” (shops and pay to play establishments) are limited to contactless interactions, but most trails are open. With time and restless energy to burn mountain bikers have been doing a lot of riding, and the great outdoors have not been unusually busy. CT residents have taken to “sheltering outside”, seeking safety and solitude in the state’s parks and forests and crowding the trails like never before, subjecting state parks to rolling closures in an effort to maintain social distance. With NEMBA’s group activities suspended all chapter work has come from solitary effort. We’ve gotten an amazing amount of it done.

The biggest news since last issue is the completion and opening of the Dividend Pond trail system. Located just over the Cromwell line in Rocky Hill it’s the newest riding area in CT. It’s geared toward families and people new to the sport, but the flowy nature of the trails, and some very unique features including a double gravity cavity, make it fun for all levels of rider. Huge kudos to Luis Moreira, who secured permission and did the majority of the building. Here is Luis’ report-

Over the course of the winter, we obtained permission from the town of Rocky Hill to build the first bike-specific trail system in that community. Located within the southern area of Dividend Pond Park is a brand-new singletrack loop, just under 2 miles long. This loop is a great way for beginners to get their tires dirty and fun for intermediate riders alike. We were able to utilize the contours of the terrain to create a unique trail in a 30-acre parcel of land. The soil is reminiscent of the sandy glacial dirt found at River Highlands, therefore draining exceptionally well after rain. There are twists and turns, logs to hop over, natural berms and wall rides, and even a skinny! At a short 1.5 miles away from River Highlands - an easy 10-minute ride on residential road- this new riding area will be a nice peripheral extension for those opting for a 12+ mile ride. There are plans to add another section or two of trail in the future. Stay tuned. At the time of this writing, the loop is already packing down nicely but could use more tires. Finally, we would like to thank all of those who volunteered on this project and for the town’s blessing for the “Div Pond” project. Hope to see you on the trails.

—Luis Moreira

In February we rerouted part of the blue trail at the far northern end of River Highlands. The old trail encroached on private property and needed to be moved. The new route makes better use of the topography in the area and is more fun to ride.

We have a lot more in the pipeline as well. We are working with Bike Cheshire to open up properties in northern and southern Cheshire of about 340 total acres. And we’re working with the Quiet Corner chapter on a bike park project in Tolland. We’re planning a bridge build and trail clean up at Naugatuck State Forest in Hamden/Bethany, and a poker ride to celebrate the cleaned-up trails.

The chapter now has a promotional video produced by chapter member and media professional Phil Anderson. Big thanks to Phil for that.

Jason Engelhardt met with local land management and enthusiastic mountain bikers at REI in Orange on Monday, 2/17. The discussion, entitled Working with Communities of Mountain Bikers, the Rockland Preserve Story, was well attended. Participants gained insights based on Rockland experiences, tailored to their own projects scattered around Central Connecticut. The workshop was part of REI’s stewardship series. REI has been an ongoing sponsor of Rockland Preserve and NEMBA chapters around CT.

We now have a new treasurer in Francisco Perez. John Joy is moving on after years of service in that position. Check signing authority has been granted and the QuickBooks files have been transferred. Thanks John and Welcome Francisco. John will continue as an at-large board member.

We’re eager to start group rides again as soon as it can be done safely. The Saturday and Sunday Ride Series’ will continue, as well as the Ride After Work (RAW) rides on Thursday nights. More information on all these rides can be found on the chapter’s Facebook page- Central CT NEMBA. Would you rather ride with a group than alone? Is there a new riding area you’d like to check out? One of our chapter rides might be for you.

The chapter once again participated in The Great Give fundraising event. As of this writing 60 donors have given us $4,575, making it our best year ever. Individual gifts ranged from $10 to $500. This was our fourth time participating in The Great Give, thanks to The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and the Valley Community Foundation. Proceeds will benefit trail care in our chapter territory.

In closing I’d like to talk a little about trail etiquette. Recent events, such as the trail closures at Kingdom Trails, where a few isolated incidents of discourtesy led to a lot of lost riding, have brought this subject to the forefront again. Keep in mind that when we ride our mountain bikes, we’re almost always riding on trails we share with other users, and we’re almost always riding on someone else’s property. It’s important that we extend a little courtesy to the landowners and fellow users. No society can thrive, or even survive, without cooperation among its members. Use common sense, and remember that your bad behavior won’t just affect you, but many others as well. Ride safely on.

—Glenn Vernes
Spring came early in Fairfield County. Low snowfall and moderate temperatures have kept us riding through the winter.

Winter Sunday morning rides have been growing in popularity. New riders have been showing up in greater numbers – including road riders wanting to try something new. There is a strong and organized road-bike community in Fairfield County, and FCNEMBA has been invited to present at various road-bike club events. Check our FCNEMBA FB page for locations and wheels-down times for our group rides. Only muddy conditions cancel our rides.

We’re thrilled that Collin Dulong of Kingdom Cycling and Experiences has relocated to Fairfield County. Collin is one of the owner’s and founders of Kingdom Cycling and Momentum Masters Program. Collin and team offer skills clinics, bike tours, and sleepaway camps for kids. See www.kingdomexperiences.com for more.

We’re scheduling our Spring trail-maintenance projects now. We have preliminary approval from the Ridgefield Conservation Commission to legitimize some old, undocumented trails in the Hemlock Hills Open Space. Some minor trail improvements are being planned here for Spring and will include a trail-work day for kids and families. Check our FCNEMBA FB page for locations and dates.

Our chapter continues to be a hotbed of youth cycling and kids big and small are getting ready for the new riding season. Families with young riders are always welcome to our designated family rides and trail love days. If you have a shredder aged between 9 and 18 and would like them to ride regularly with a gaggle of kids, CCAP now has 3 teams in the area. Check them out www.ctbikes.org and come ride with us!

—Mike Malwitz + Monika Stokes
Etiquette is a big topic. Parking is an important sub-topic. In one of our newer riding areas, there is parking in a big cul-de-sac at the end of a residential road. One side of the cul-de-sac is bordered by open space and the other by private property and houses. There is also a fire hydrant. We are working with the town to find a more suitable place for parking, but in the meantime, we need to be extra careful. I have seen people ride up someone’s driveway, ride on someone’s lawn, park in front of the hydrant, and drive faster than needed because they were late for a ride. And cars have been parked there after dark. One of these events by itself would not cause consternation among the residents, but over time, these annoyances can add up. One or two complaints to town officials and then we will lose access to that side of the trail system.

We had a fun night at Class Cycles in January and saw Francis Pickering’s photos of a very interesting mountain bike trip he took to South Africa. Now we are in our planning stages for the spring. While we are still under Covid restrictions, and most of our activities have been cancelled for the spring, we are having Zoom meetings. Also, Jason Engelheardt, Central CT member is designing maps for Trolley and for Rockhouse. Otherwise, thanks to Joe Lanier, land manager for Rockhouse in Oxford, we were able to open the Pink/White 188 to Perkins connector. Also Joe Lanier, Dave Herde, and Lori Johnstone are in the process naming the trails. And kudos to Mark Coleman for cleaning up garbage and debris off Holbrook Rd in Oxford. The trail is much more pleasant now. And he did not remove the bowling ball or the skull so the fun artifacts remain. Also a big thanks to Andy Engel, Dave Herde, and Armand Broncal for doing some much needed maintenance at Waldo. Andy also connected the two big boardwalks on the yellow.

If our ride season starts up we will have our Monday night intermediate ride led by Dave Herde, our Tuesday night beginner ride led by Paula Burton, and we have a new intermellow ride on Wednesdays, led by Chris Del Sol.

If you are interested in being on the board, please let Paula Burton know. We also are in need of a ride coordinator, again contact Paula if interested. See you on the trails!
Winter is a distant memory and the warm inviting spring weather is upon us once again. The mountain bike season is about to begin!

Things are very active at NW CT NEMBA and planning is underway for many exciting projects and events this year. Trail work crews plan to tackle projects of all shapes and sizes. From the newly marked bike routes on Johnnycake Mountain to boardwalks spanning the wetlands around Freedom Brook in Burlington, bridge recovery and restoration in Harwinton and continued trail improvements at Cowles Park, there is a lot on the plate this year.

Check online for the details and dates of our rides this season. Website: http://www.nwctnemba.org

In closing, a reminder about monitoring trail conditions during the next few months. The spring is an exciting time, the snow has melted, the days are longer, and the weather begins to warm. The desire to be out in the woods on the bike is at its highest level. It’s also the time of the year which the trails are most sensitive to damage. Before heading out for a ride, be sure to gather as much information on the trail and weather conditions as possible and always err on the side of caution. Just because the weather is sunny and warm does not mean that the trails are dry and ready to ride without causing damage. A small amount of restraint during this sensitive time of year will go a long way to keep the trails in great shape for the duration of the riding season. Check out up to date trail conditions on Trailhub.com. See you out on the trails.

—Jon R
Advocacy & Trails

In light of recent events at Kingdom Trails, our mountain bike family is reminded that our actions speak louder than words. We are grateful for our many charter members who are aware that their behavior on trails (home or away) is a reflection of our whole group. We encourage them to be positive trail stewards and friendly, thoughtful riders so we can continue to enjoy sharing our trails with the rest of the community.

Respect is key, from when crossing paths with other trail users to abiding by trail closures. For example, Goodwin State Forest is currently logging dead trees from recent gypsy moth caterpillar infestation and have closed several frequently ridden trails. Staying off these trails is in everyone’s best interest for safety but also to continue our good relations with foresters and land managers. Riders can learn more at www.friendsofgoodwinforest.org and by following our Facebook page for updates.

Our past president Stacey Jimenez helped build strong relationships with our local land managers. Our new board continues this legacy to ensure good communication and provide support with trail maintenance as needed. Our chapter has members who are active in local “Friends of” groups and our new leadership is reaching out and attending their meetings. These volunteer organizations are dedicated to supporting their local parks or forests in many ways. They welcome our attendance and interest. We have also partnered with The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor, offering rides in their activity series and advertising in their Explore Guide—this is a win-win since their promotion efforts help broaden our audience. By having a presence with these organizations, QC NEMBA is not just a group for mountain bikers but an asset to the greater community.

Green Falls – Pachaug

After over 3 years of design, layout and approval by CT DEEP, the new trail in the Green Falls section of Pachaug State Forest is close to completion, thanks to many volunteers and the guidance and effort of Bob Caporaso and Glenn Tourtellot. It is cleared and blazed and ready for tires on the ground, although there will be some bridge building to come in a few wet areas. We will continue to offer trail days as weather permits. Stay tuned for events on our Facebook page. The next section of this trail is already in the process of flagging and clearing. We are grateful for our relationship with the land managers to have this trail built.

Group Rides & Events

We can’t wait to get back on the trails! Our board has been busy planning our 2020 ride season. More info on the NEMBA website

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Cris Cadiz
As true nearly everywhere, SECT NEMBA and its partners have focused on caring for family and each other over these last months, adopting and adapting to social distancing and face masks, and trying to stay safe and connected in these trying times. The term “trail etiquette” has reached new dimensions as parks, parking lots and trails everywhere have been pushed to their limits and beyond with hikers, bikers and equestrians under stay-at-home mandates. Most have had to adjust to COVID-19’s social distancing. However, with the volume this has been tough on even the widest trails and very difficult on single track. State guidelines throughout New England have been focused on sharing the trails and provides guidance for all: move to the side or off the trail to maintain 6’ distance or mask-up if this can not be achieved (remember, cyclists are supposed to yield to equestrians and pedestrians) and plan ahead to protect the safety of medical personnel or essential workers should an injury or unforeseen circumstance arise. In other words, cyclists should bring a face covering or mask. Lastly, the trails themselves are showing the wear and tear of so many feet, hooves and tires. It is important to tread/ride lightly, avoid wet trails, and ride and walk less populated when possible.

SECT NEMBA had planned to provide support for the 8th annual Tour de Lyme at Ashlawn Farm on May 17th, a charity cycling event supporting the Lyme Land Trust. This event has been postponed to Sunday September 13, 2020, please stay tuned for details as the event date draws closer. SECT NEMBA will work with event organizers to clear and mark the MTB route, and plan ride sag to be sure everyone finds their way home. For mountain bikers, the ‘Rider’s Test’ has it all. Traversing several local preserves, the course features three monster climbs, 25 miles of twisty-techy descents, hanging valleys packed with natural features, and fast fire roads with a mile or two of breath-catching pavement. Work completed prior to the spring date has trails running well, we encourage social distance riding on Nenantic Trails!

SECT also had planned to provide support for the CCAP (Connecticut Cycling Advancement Program) Breakaway Benefit Ride on May 3rd, 2020. This historically is the cornerstone fundraiser for CCAP and provides hundreds of kids with access to cycling and cycling teams all across the state. Over 550 youth riders participate across 47 teams in mountain biking, road cycling, and cyclocross. This of course had to be cancelled and was replaced by a virtual challenge from May 27-31 including a range of road rides from 20 miles to the 100km Metric Century and MTB challenges in Watopia. While the event will be in the record books when you read this, donations to CCAP at www.ctcyclingadvancement.org are welcome.

CCAP/SECT NEMBA Bike Night was held on March 12. This is all about local youth cycling from beginners of all ages to experienced team riders. This info packed night was graciously hosted by Mystic Cycle Centre as well as the Ledyard Middle School Bike Club. Topics included: where and when to ride; bikes and gear; trail etiquette; how to find other families and lead groups to ride with; how teams work and how to sign up; how can parents get involved; and the mysteries of trail gnomes. Local family riding experts as well as kids, parents and the head coach from the amazing Ledyard Middle School Bike Club were there. Attendees learned the basics and much more, met like-minded families to ride with and enjoyed pizza and cupcakes.

SECT members Brett and Tina Severson have with partnered with the Specialized Soil Searching program to host a trail maintenance days including an event on the Grayville trail system in Hebron, CT in the fall of 2019. Soil Searching is a movement to recognize, celebrate and support the efforts that go into building and maintaining the trails that we all love to ride. Volunteers from NEMBA, Specialized. Cycling Concepts and the surrounding neighborhood cleared a season’s worth of overgrowth on several trails. Everyone was rewarded with pizza at the end of the night to celebrate all of the hard work!!

In a time of increased trail use, we all must remember the trails we ride in SECT are owned by someone else. It is critically important to establish contacts and communication routes with landowners, reach out periodically to be sure any concerns are being heard and dealt with, coordinate both emergency and routine maintenance, and support larger scale projects. In 2019, working closely with SECT, Groton Open Space Association, Inc. (GOSA) opened their trailed properties to mountain bikes. GOSA’s The Merritt Family Forest (TMFF) was a featured attraction for SECT’s 2019 MBAs. Before COVID restrictions were ordered, GOSA leadership identified a persistent boggy spot on TMFF, and asked SECT NEMBA members to assist with the design and building of a puncheon with rock armoring at either end. Of course, we agreed to support this activity and donated money as well as time and equipment to the effort (see pictures). Game of Logging 1 chain saw safety course was held on GOSA’s Sheep Farm in 2019, and Game of Logging 2 will be held there when COVID restrictions allow with members of both organizations attending both sessions. This open and valuable collaborative relationship has benefitted both organizations; it is critical that we work with landowners and local trail organizations to maintain and improve the trails we ride. No dig, no ride.

SECT was awarded a $500.00 NEMBA Trail Grant to fund an Eagle Scout Project to improve the multi-use capabilities of the Nathan Lester Property in Ledyard, CT. While MTBiking is allowed, existing trails pretty much limit use to hikers and dog walkers. The project proposal will: revise existing double and single track to accommodate MTBs; create a bike station for parking and light maintenance/repair of bikes; cut one or more new trails; and improve trail marking throughout the property. While not technically challenging, the terrain is suitable for all age ranges and abilities and the property has parking as well as a historic house and gardens open to the public in season, and will soon link to greenway trails!

Rides
As mandated by both CT and NEMBA itself, SECT’s sponsored rides and events have been cancelled until COVID restrictions allow. Once we can resume, planned SECT NEMBA women’s rides have been revamped for 2020. Novice and beginner+ rides will focus on fun, friendly rides. The novice group will be an easy loop ideal for ladies trying the sport for the first time or those refreshing their skills after some time off the trails. The beginner+ ride will follow immediately after the end of the novice ride with a longer, more technical loop geared towards riders that have attended a Novice Ride before and/or those that feel comfortable on a bike or on the trails. Weekly women’s inter-mellow/intermediate rides will explore the same four SECT trail systems each month so riders will see the same area several times over the season to work on challenges and learn the trails. The systems range from flowy with gentle climbs to intermediate + (you’ll be so proud of yourself for surviving ... er, completing your ride). We also plan to resume Kid/Family rides when allowed.

Last year, we tried to get kids out with their adults about twice a month at Haley Farm. The ride length and route was based on the ability level of the group, with the ability level geared towards entry level. Water, helmets and an off-road style bike without training wheels were a must – as was having an adult joining in on the ride. The rides were about an hour long with a goal just getting families out and having fun. Once allowed, the schedules, locations and details for the women’s and kids/ family rides will be on NEMBA.org with updates/cancellations on the website and Facebook

Samantha and Rachel Bradley roll onto the Airline Trail in Colchester, CT on a family social distance ride. Photo by Kim Bradley.

---Janet Andersen
This winter riding season started off with much less amounts of snow compared to last year, but as of this writing storms are starting to increase in frequency and snowpack is finally starting to increase. With the deeper snow comes increased volunteer efforts towards shoveling bridges, snowshoeing trails and generally clearing off the trails. Our partners, Maine Huts & Trails, Town of Carrabassett Valley and Sugarloaf also keeping their trails in good riding shape for riding and skiing with many hours of grooming. Many thanks to all that are helping out to make this a great winter riding season.

The Carrabassett Fat Tire Race was held in February. The weather cooperated leading up to the event and on race day. This made for pleasant riding conditions and a great riding surface. Reports indicated this was the best fat tire event thus far in Carrabassett Valley. It was great to have the race part of the Maine Fat Bike Winter Series and thank you to Sugarloaf for co-hosting and supporting a successful event.

Allspeed Cyclery & Snow will be back at the Outdoor Center this summer season. Great to have their support and services back. Stay tuned to their social media channels for summer plans and offerings. They usually have a fun opening social event around Memorial Day weekend to kick off the summer season, stay tuned for more information on the 2020 plans!

2020 Summer & Fall Events:

Volunteer Trail Work Days (May, June & July):

CRNEMBA needs you! We rely on volunteer trail crews to get our network open and address many maintenance projects that keep the trails riding sweet. A big effort is also needed in early July to get the Carrabassett Backcountry Cycle Challenge course in shape. We usually meet at the Sugarloaf Outdoor Center at 9:00 in the morning. Don’t forget your bike; we always leave time for a ride when the work is done. Dates and details are available on our website https://carrabassettnemba.org/.

Carrabassett Backcountry Cycle Challenge (July 18):

Celebrating its 10th year, the Carrabassett Backcountry Cycle Challenge (CBCC) offers 100k, 50k, and 25k race options. A National Ultra Endurance (NUE) Series race, it’s also the largest yearly fundraiser for the Carrabassett Valley trail network. We had a great 2019 race with over 500 participants. The event will be capped again this at 600 riders and initial registration has been very strong, so register early!! You can visit the CBCC Facebook page to see photos and stay in touch with what’s happening with the race.

Carrabassett Adventure Ride (Sept. 26):

This event is part of the KONA Mountain Bike Adventure Series and will be held at the Sugarloaf Outdoor Center. There will be guided rides offered for all abilities. The day will end with a BBQ and an informal annual meeting, which we promise to keep short. In 2019 the day also hosted a high school mountain bike race, hosted by the Maine Syndicate. The plan is to do the same again for 2020, which adds great energy to the day. In addition, Carrabassett Trails are now part of Bike the Borderlands, a regional mountain bike advocacy group. Borderlands will be promoting and supporting a social event on this day as well. Turnout for this day is expected to be strong, this should be a highlight of the riding season. Check our website for more details as they become available.

Happy spring and soon summer riding!

—Warren Gerow, CRNEMBA President
The Scandinavians have a longstanding tradition of Everyman’s Right. The right to roam across another’s land or even camp on it in some countries. It works, I think, because the right is approached with deference as opposed to entitlement. It seems we as mountain bikers are navigating a similar condition where rules are not entirely sufficient on the trail. Empathy and respect can change an us or them encounter into a shared experience.

At CeMENemba we have some enviable relationships with many land stewards and organizations both private and public. Public tends to be more straightforward. They often have a vision and policies in place giving us a framework everyone can agree on. And they want people to use the land.

Private is problematic and managing expectations becomes more nuanced. We ran into a situation last year where our success in creating a winter riding paradise lost us access at a trail head. And it wasn’t just riders but also others who saw opportunity in the location.

Our trails attract people who want to recreate outdoors. If someone is outside getting exercise and fresh air you can’t knock them for taking advantage of what for them is a path in the forest. But you can educate them and with luck create a partner in the cause.

Aside from my engaging smile, and corresponding humility, my most trusted trail tool might be the little bell on my bars. I’m always amazed at the cheerful response I receive as people whirl around after it dings. I can only imagine they think I’ve brought ice cream. Of course I’ve also slowed to a walking pace and begrudgingly let go of the idea I will rail that berm ahead. But I’d like to think those walkers will be a slightly more attuned to their surroundings and be happy to see another biker blissfully cruise by and just maybe a little more respectful of the work that went into that trail.

Weather forecasts this winter belie the fat biking conditions we experienced in Central Maine. A little patience between storms provided many days of firm, flowing white ribbons of fun this year. York Hill Farms has graciously given us plowed parking and access to the Kennebec Highlands and new trails on their property to boot. Brian Alexander continues to fine tune his trail drag creating an amazing riding experience. Josh Staples kept Allen Whitney groomed and ready. Both these volunteers used their own equipment and time.

On the other side of central Maine Brocktown at Lost Valley in Auburn is shaping up nicely as a new fat bike specific riding destination. Lost Valley hosted the inaugural running of CeMENemba’s fat bike enduro. It began with a tour of Brocktown (just across a bridge from Lost Valley) in the afternoon and ended with a race under the lights. Racers sampled blue and red courses, levitated to the top by chairlift and ended by celebrating the day with awards at the Lost Valley Brewing Company.

Spring is upon us. See you out there!

—Ian Ogilvie
Thanks to a dedicated group of volunteer groomers, we have enjoyed consistent riding at the Gorham trails, as well as at Bradbury Mountain State Park. This winter has seen more fat biking than ever at trail systems in Portland and Cape Elizabeth, provided time for thorough boot packing by snow-shoers, hikers and dog-walkers. GPNEBMA recently published a list of Fat Biking “Best Practices” to encourage responsible trail usage and foster a positive relationship with landowners for continued use of the local trails in the winter. Among the key points are:

- Remember to always be polite to other trail users (fat bikers are the newest trail users)
- Only ride where you are allowed
- Do not ride if the snow is too soft and you are leaving ruts.
- If snow is soft, grab some snowshoes or skis instead and help pack down the trails until it firms up again.

We are also encouraging members to join their local Nordic skiing or snowmobile club and consider donating to NEMBA’s trail grooming efforts if fat biking is a key part of a long winter survival plan.

GPNEBMA continues to hold monthly Tour de Greater Portland Rides when possible, with a recent ride in February on the Gorham trails. Please check our new website — gpnemba.org — or Facebook page for further information. Keep an eye out for the popular Wednesday evening rides; we’ll start those up again in the spring as soon as conditions allow.

And last but certainly not least, in order to thank and celebrate Rob Lavoie for his service to our Chapter, in addition to his stalwart advocacy for the Gorham trails, we surprised Rob with a party in January. Many thanks as well to the Gorham Conservation Commission for joining with us in our effort to recognize this essential voice in our community. In addition, we would also like to thank Mary Dummond for her service this past year as a Board member. Mary kept the chapter updated on social media and helped coordinate many events; she will be missed. With several Board members departing to pursue other endeavors, we have put out a call for new members to apply, and anticipate announcing our new members at our Spring Social, to be held in late April or early May.

—Ilse Teeters-Trumpy
Penobscot Region has had a relatively quiet winter after a very busy 2019 on the trail building front. We have strengthened existing relationships with land managers and fostered new relations with new land owners offering the mounting biking community incredible opportunities for future trail development. Much in the way of behind the scenes work has gone into building these relationships that are founded upon trust and respect. This can only be created with the consistent work of a handful of dedicated volunteers. Many of these relationships have taken years to create. These relationships need to be maintained with communication and being invested in the lands that our trails lie on. This is the key to our success as we move forward. While it is important for the chapter to build membership and represent the mountain biking community, we must understand that our most important relationship is with our land owners. If we don’t respect them, then there is a very good possibility mountain bikers could lose access to certain trails or even entire trail systems.

We must always remember that we are visitors and volunteers just like any other user group and we do not have special entitlements. Riding trails on public or private lands is a gift, not a privilege! We all need to keep this in mind when we ride. Ask yourself, are my actions or my trail use today hurting my chance to ride again tomorrow?

The best of us in the mountain biking community work hard to transform land for the better and create new places to ride, whereas the worst among us undermine all the hard work of fostering relationships with just a fraction of the effort. While most mountain bikers in the region have respect for the land owners, other users, a small number do not. Recently there has been a return to the “old ways” in regard to illegal trail building and trail maintenance believing we are privileged and can do what we want. Reasons such as; “this is how we used to do it,” or “no one will know” are given. Our chapter leaders trying to implement a policy of “we” just look the other way while this happens is very concerning. In the Penobscot Region we had reports of a local shop ride taking a tour of illegally cut trails. Behavior like this by those in charge of leadership seems to have created a new environment where rogue trail building is on the rise in all our trail systems and un-sanctioned trail work is being done by local mountain bikers setting us back a decade or more.

We must always remember that when we ride we are always ambassadors of our sport and most importantly those in leadership at NEMBA need to lead by example.
Greetings from Six Rivers!
This winter we have been having such a good time riding snow that it’s tough to think about the upcoming spring. In fact, we doubled our fleet from one SnowDog to two this year, and are now grooming terrain in Topsham, Brunswick and Bath for a grand total of 20+ miles of high-quality winter riding in the region. All this terrain is the result of both a dedicated group of groomers and the blessings of our land owners. It will be hard to say goodbye to all the miles of smooth, white ribbons weaving through the trees.

One of our chapter’s major goals is to get more folks out on the trails, to enjoy them in all seasons while appreciating the beautiful land they pass through. To accomplish this, Six Rivers has forged close relationships with land owners, land trusts and municipalities to ensure that they feel positive about mountain bikers using their land. Our approach is to:

1. Offer group rides with Six Rivers leaders to teach folks about the area’s trails and to model good riding behavior while out there. These rides also provide face-to-face interaction where riders can get to know each other, building and solidifying our MTB community.

2. Engage with land owners to get express permission to ride on their property through the use of MOUs (Memoranda Of Understanding), and thank them annually with a letter and some Six Rivers swag. Acknowledging landowners for their willingness to share their land with us shows them how much we appreciate it!

3. Be sure to ask permission for any and all projects such as trail repairs, bridge building, races and winter grooming. I know this may sound stupid, but it’s important to ask for this permission prior to doing the projects…

4. Teach the children well. In all our youth programming we are sure to show the kids how to be friendly, polite and respectful trail users. By raising the next generation of riders to be good stewards, we are protecting the future of our sport.

We are holding this year’s spring fundraiser at the Bath Skate Park which should be a lot of fun. It’s next to the pump track and the area where we plan to build an MTB skills area and will offer bikers the chance to check out the site. If weather permits, we will offer rides on the Whiskeag Trail which passes right by the park and may even offer some skills clinics. You can get up-to-date information on the event by following us on Instagram, Facebook and checking on our website at sixriversnemba.org.

We are still in the planning stages of this season’s work days, so stay tuned. It is likely that we will be helping our friends at The Kennebec Estuary Land Trust with some new trail construction in Bath and we will be looking for help.

We hope you can join us soon for one of our group rides. Either way, we hope to see you out on the trails soon!

—Lawrence Kovacs

Six Rivers

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Secretary: Jack Bateman
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Matt Viera grooming in Bath. Photo by Nate Jung

Charlene, our new SnowDog. Photo by Matt Viera

6R Board members Kristin Jhamb and Jaret Reblin out in the snow with superstar members Charles Lopez and Mark Fochesato.

Michael Evan pulling a cargo of cuteness at the Bowdoinham Fatbird ride. Photo by Lindsay Currier

Matt Viera riding in Bath. Photo by Nate Jung
Welcome Spring. Hopefully the freeze-thaw cycles we’ve had all winter mean an easier Spring. We can’t wait to get this season started.

We’re stepping out of the normal Single Tracks update to talk about trail respect. There sure is a lot of turmoil and conjecture about the recent closings at Kingdom Trails. And the reasons for the closings are many. We’ve been talking to some of the local landowners in the KT area and they did confirm that the attitudes of certain mountain bikers are one of the biggest reasons for the closures. There are other issues but the one issue we have the most influence over is the attitudes of some of our self-entitled brother and sisters.

Swinging this full circle, we’d like to point out a couple of places around the Valley that are experiencing similar disregard for land managers and trail stewards, signs and requests. There is a quiet little spot here in the valley that has a couple of sections to it. One section is somewhat more sensitive to riding when wet. The other 18 miles are more rugged and riding while wet is less of a concern. Yet riders knock down the sign on the sensitive side and ride a rut right through the trail. Much to the local trail steward’s bewilderment. He politely refers to them as Me-Monsters.

At West Hill Dam we have an MOU with the rangers stating that we will self-police ourselves and if we see issues, we will notify the rangers and shut down the trail. We have done that on the Mike Trail where there is a large water break out area. It wasn’t even moist when we flagged and cut the trail, but it is a rutted mess now. There are still riders, riding past the ropes and signs. Which seems crazy as all the other trails in the system are open.

The good news is the vast, vast majority of riders are respectful and courteous of our trails and requests. Which makes this volunteer gig so worthwhile. Here in the Valley we have such wonderful and giving volunteers and no lack of trail stewardship. Every time there is a post of a closure or blockage of one kind or another, we get multiple volunteers offering to help clear the issue.

And when the call goes out for a trail day the same thing happens. Lots of volunteers show up to help out. Which is great because we have a full season of trail and bridge building coming up this season. Lots of Demo Days coming and a yet to be announced extra Fun Ride this summer.

Please remember that in the public’s view what one of us does creates a reflection of the rest of us. A reflection all mountain bikers have to live with. Please ride responsibly. Momentum is Your Friend!

—Brian Forestal
Greetings from lovely Cape Cod.

We had an unseasonably warm winter with no snow to speak of and the riding has been pretty good. We have had some very strong wind storms and all of our members have chipped in to help keep the trails clear.

We are headed into 2020 with a pretty good relationship with the Town of Barnstable Conservation Department and the Town of Sandwich DNR. We are also working with the Sandwich Recreation Department to host again this year, an after school Mountain Bike Program from the Oakridge School for kids from 3rd thru 6th grades. Last year was our first attempt at this program and they invited us back to give it a go again this year. We are all looking forward to it.

We are also continuing to work with the Sandwich DNR to mark out and cut new trails around and near the Oakridge school. Some for the kids and some for US.

And over in West Barnstable, we are working with the Conservation Department to mark out and reroute some of the washed out trails that need help. The old 149 section of TOT really needs some help. The Old Jail Lane crew continues to improve the network of trails in that area.

And as always, respect the trails we use and remember that they are all Multi-Use.
Ok everyone – as we know 2020 isn’t off to the greatest start at all. Nembafest has been cancelled and Dirt Rag has gone bankrupt. Top that off with the tiniest amount of snow we’ve had in the past few years (at least here in Greater Boston) and fat biking has been basically just “biking”. I guess the latter has made for a nice extended riding season for our regular bikes so maybe that part isn’t so bad. I will say that being someone who recently got a fat bike. I was hoping for just a little more snow to break it in!

With everything going on in the mountain bike world, we should take some time to reflect. I know there has been a lot of discussion, speculation, frustration and finger pointing with everything that has happened. Sustained trail access is a problem we all must contemplate. Trail access really is a privilege, not a right. We as a riding community need to be better. We ride on public and private land everywhere we ride. Mountain bike access is not always allowed - we know this very well in Greater Boston, where getting access to the Fells is what launched NEMBA back in the day. It still can be contentious from time to time.

We should already know to be gracious, to be mindful of others and just be respectful to everyone – landowners, DCR Rangers and other trail users. This needs to be true, always- even when we are trying to beat that KOM we’ve been trying to crush for months. Not everyone on the trail knows why there is a mountain bike event. The trails are not always closed to other users and not everyone gets the memo that there is a mountain bike event.

If you think of it, pack out more than you brought in. Are you taking a snack break or repairing a flat and notice a wrapper on the ground? Grab it – it isn’t going to slow you down.

Just some thoughts. Also, keep in mind that with the news of KT we can’t assume that mountain bikers are the only ones following the events. There are most certainly other user groups out there that don’t necessarily love mountain bikers – they’re probably following this closely too. Looking for ideas. We can be better and rise above.

Now, on to some Greater Boston chapter news:

Speaking of access issues, Greater Boston has been working to reinforce our relationship with the DCR as well as pick up where we left off in the Fells. In Mid-January, a few GB NEMBA representatives attended a meeting with the DCR to reestablish a cordial relationship. We learned how stressed the DCR is with the Fells. The Fells is so close to a metropolitan area and gets so many users every day that the DCR is incredibly overwhelmed. Underfunded and overworked, the DCR is trying to appease all user groups while maintaining an enjoyable and safe outdoor experience. They’ve got a lot on their plate and to the staff, it feels like a thankless job. They are willing to work with us on many of our ideas, some of our ideas were in their hopper and they need the help.

We’ve had a couple very highly attended meetings to discuss the future of the Fells in 2020. Our three focus groups: “Understanding the RMP”, “Trails, Trails, Trails” and “Signage”, have been meeting and gaining some headway. According to the RMP, NEMBA can develop more trails in the Fells, namely in the Dark Hollow and Rock Circuit areas. The simple assessment: THIS WILL BE HAPPENING! Along with some sorely needed trail maintenance in other various areas – the DCR was ok with this. Stay tuned for more detail on these fronts.

Signage is a tricky one, but not necessarily something we can’t do. There are already some sad “Bike Loop” signs here and there, but they’re few and far between. We may have some support on these too but we need some more time to work with the DCR. They already have plans to erect some trailhead kiosks and seemed very open to receiving our input on what to put in them especially some trail user etiquette suggestions. This is a good thing because it means we can try to make some of the recommendations general and not only bike focused.

We have another meeting with the DCR about a week after the time of writing this, so there will be more updates in the next issue. If you can’t wait and want to get involved before that- reach out to us on Facebook or to any of our officers. Come to a chapter meeting. Get involved! Our meetings are almost always on the first Monday of each month – the time and location is posted online.

Let’s ride!

Corey D Bollier

Eddie Tyrance at Russell Mill. Photo by Margaret Kosmala
The Coronavirus Pandemic that has swept the country over the past few months has had a dramatic impact on mountain biking with many restrictions imposed as a result. The popular venues for mountain biking on Boston’s North Shore are now inundated on weekends by people and families walking the trails and fire roads. Maintaining social distancing to avoid spreading the virus while walking or mountain biking under these conditions is difficult if not impossible. Riders have been encouraged to stay away from the main parking lots and avoid the State Parks and Forests entirely on weekends. Throngs of people have been going to Harold Parker SF on weekends and the DCR has restricted access and closed parking lots. Many folks are parking their cars on the side of the roads as a result. Mountain bikers are encouraged to visit the popular venues on weekdays when it is less crowded and to park your car outside of the State Park or ride from home if possible.

Since riding in groups of any size is strongly discouraged, the NSNEMBA weekly ride series that was scheduled to begin in early May is on hold indefinitely. The same is true for trail projects. A major project to extend Hornidge Bridge over a flooded section of trail in the Skug Reservation adjacent to HPSF is waiting for approval by the Andover Conservation Commission and will hopefully be completed later this year. In-person Chapter Meetings, always pleasant and fun occasions, will also not be taking place for the foreseeable future.

Plans are going forward for the Wicked Ride of the East at HPSF scheduled for October 25, 2020. It is NSNEMBA’s marquee event of the year and it would be a major disappointment if it ends up being cancelled. The DCR Permit application and fee has been submitted and is under review as of this writing.

The challenge, camaraderie and fun of group mtb rides will be missed in the coming months but please follow the State and DCR guidelines during the current crisis. Be safe and stay healthy everyone!

—Hank Kells

A full and partially closed Jenkins Parking Lot at HPSF taken on April 25, 2020. Photo by Hank Kells
This past winter was interesting. Part frozen tundra, part mud season, part summer tease... and 57 degrees end of February. March ‘usually’ contains some semblance of mud season, but with the ground never freezing hard this year, things are looking up!

Events since Jan 1:
The Annual First Ride, at Wompatuck on New Year’s Day. A non-event that draws out the local riff-raft, some apres-ride parking lot ‘Q’ and espresso may have been enjoyed....

Wompy WinterFest drew over 300 riders, in part due to the exceptional weather and trails conditions. This yearly event is actually a Friends of Wompatuck (FOW) event that we co-sponsor, so BIGGEST THANKS to FOW and BikeBarn!! Our dedicated trail crews tirelessly cleaned up the trails for weeks preceding ( of course they do all year-round ) and setup two arrowed loops that had a ‘warming stop’ after climbing Turkey Hill, provided by Trustees of Reservations at Weir River Farm. With a Mardi Gras theme, colorful beads, masks, Zydeco and Dixieland music playing, we served up Jambalaya with traditional Andouillle sausage as well as a vegetarian version, and Corey French’s sizzling habanero spiced jerk chicken, our only regret was that we ran out of food before some people got back! Apparently the event has grown that much, so we’ll plan for more next year!

We here in the Southeast Kingdom have BIG plans for 2020. We have very active and dedicated VP's, who are excited about their parks and getting things done. New trails and bridges are being planned in many of our parks this spring. See our SE Mass NEMBA facebook group and SE Kingdom Rides for updates and details.

Co-sponsored event this spring:
Bikes Not Bombs Bikes Collection, Acella Construction Co, 35 Washington Street, Pembroke. Wompy rider Dave Dirubbo graciously offered up his company parking lot and building to host the event. This is an official Bikes Not Bombs event, and all donated bikes and parts will go directly to those in need of bikes for transportation in countries around the world. As the BNB motto goes “using the bicycle as a vehicle for social change”. We can all relate with that!

See you all on the trails!
—Steve Cobble
As we start 2020, it’s a great time to take a look at how far we’ve come for trails and access in the past 5 years. We now have excellent trail networks in Barre, Gardner, Hardwick, Hubbardston, Leominster, Lunenburg, Oakham, Petersham, and Rutland. This year we should see more coming online in the Ware River Watershed, Town Farm Hill, and Treasure Valley. In the next two years we expect Oakham State Forest to have some new trails as well, and we’re talking with representatives from East Quabbin and Common Ground Land Trusts about new projects on some of their lands.

By now our March chapter meeting to kick the year off has happened and we’ve outlined the chapter meeting schedule and formalized chapter leadership for the year. We’re putting focus on better communications, more rides, skills clinics, and trail work days including instruction.

Quite honestly, we have more legit projects than people to lead them all, but we move as quickly as our volunteers can. We’re hopeful to grow this base and get more done by making potential projects more transparent. We have small teams of people focused on each area that our chapter has involvement in, and these teams talk with the land managers, attend meetings that relate to the area, propose projects, and with help from the rest of us, get work days scheduled and staffed. It’s a model that’s working and if you’re interested in getting involved at any level contact icycle@gmail.com.

AMC’s annual Trailsfest is on Saturday, June 6th this year. The theme is celebrating outdoor recreation, and activities will include hiking, kayaking, rock climbing, mountain and road biking to name a few. Wachusett NEMBA organized rides in Leominster State Forest to celebrate Trailsfest 2019, and with some volunteer support, we can offer a variety of rides again this year on June 6. If you can volunteer to lead or sag a ride, and/or man a table at Mt. Wachusett in the afternoon, email lydiabarter@charter.net.

Here are some of our specific goals for this year by area:

**Barre**
- Complete the upper loop at Town Farm Hill.
- Add Town Farm trails to Trailforks

**Leominster State Forest and Leominster City Land**
- Rehabilitate/extend some aging boardwalk on Organism Trail and new build of small boardwalk on No Dabs trail (city land)
- Finish stone armoring on Get Going trail (city land)
- Continue discussions with DCR of trail maintenance, issues, etc. at LSF

**Lunenburg**
- A $21,267 Recreational Trails Program grant will be used to provide color coded trail markers and 130 coordinated “You Are Here” trail map signs to expand the use of Lunenburg’s existing 22 miles of trails on conservation property. Regional trail system map signs will show how trails are interconnected among multiple properties. The grant will also provide informational kiosks and emergency access gates. A Lunenburg Trails Workgroup will be formed to create a Lunenburg Trails Plan and to implement the grant.
- The public will be encouraged to use Trailforks, an interactive smartphone application, to improve communication about trail conditions and the accuracy of the trail maps.

**Oakham State Forest**
- While we await DCR’s logging project to start and finish before we can get started, we’re continuing to explore potential trail layouts so when DCR is ready we can put up flags, get walkthroughs, and get our $50k RTP grant back on track.

**Treasure Valley Scout Reservation**
- Build a ~40’ single span bridge on the Blue Trail.
- Build a youth trail skills development park in the craters area.
- Create a five year trail development plan.

**Trout Brook Holden**
- Propose solutions to the extensive wet sections of the Blue Trail.

**Ware River Watershed**
- Finish applying for 2020 NEMBA Signature Grant for funding trail restoration projects resulting from anticipated legalization of the WRW trail network to shared non-motorized use.
- Work with other local user groups including AMC, BRDC, and BSTRA on a series of trail work days to bring all legal trails into usable and sustainable condition.

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**Wachusett NEMBA members car pooling to a local trailhead at LSF! Photo by Don Seifert**

**Wachusett NEMBA members car pooling to a local trailhead at LSF! Photo by Don Seifert**

**Jamie rounding a turn on some prime night snow. Photo by Brett Russ**
Winter riding has been most excellent. This year we have been able to spend more time riding than grooming. The snow timing, amounts, and consistency has allowed us to ride the trails in more times than not. We would all rather ride our bikes than snowshoe! Jay Noseworthy has stepped in to help this year, lending Peter Poanessa a hand in running the Snowdog for those storms that do require a groom. Peter greatly appreciates the help.

The big news this year will be the Keene Bike Park at Wheelock. The Keene Bike Park is a joint project of Brattleboro-Keene NEMBA and the City of Keene, New Hampshire to build a fun, family-oriented park where people of all ages can learn, play, and enjoy bike-related activities. We are working with Powder Horn Trail Company of Belmont, NH to design and build the bike park. Find out more about the bike park, and how you can help make it happen, at https://www.keenebikepark.org/

With the recent shake up at Kingdom Trails in regards to the 3 (now 4?) large landowners closing their trails to mountain bikers, I got to thinking about how good we have it here in that we don’t have these types of problems. But I figured I’d do a little post on the socials anyway and remind everyone that it is good to be nice since you never know who you are interacting with out on the trails, and because life is just easier when you are nice…

But then I paused for a second and recalled that we do indeed have these issues.

- Just this last year we lost access to the far northern end of Far Side in Drummer Hill due to the actions of mountain bikers. A short, but very fun section of trail was closed all summer and fall.
- We’ve been closed out of the Beaver Pond area in West Keene for several years now. That area pre-dates, and is adjacent to the Food Network. And it connected to the trails off Hyland Hill. Think about what a huge area we would have if those trails were still in play.
- We screwed up in Putney and caused a lot of trouble over there, getting those trails closed off.
- Trails above Living Memorial Park that are on private land have been closed at various times.
- Hyland Hill has had its share of rider/hunter conflict in the fall, and now trails are closed during deer season.
- There is currently a parking “situation” developing at the lower entrance to the Food Network where neighbors have posted no parking signs along the roadway in the city right-of-way. While the no parking signs are for all trail users, we are pretty easy to call out with our bicycles and fat tires.

For most of these areas we were able to mend the bridges, make amends, and come to an agreement. But some trails remain closed, and are likely to stay that way for a long time.

So when you are out riding your bike and come up on another trail user, just be nice. Even if they aren’t nice to you. Because they could be the landowner or the landowner’s friends/family. Or they could own a local business that we want to ask to donate to our bike park. Stop and small talk them, comment on how nice it is to be out on that fine day, or at least slow down as you pass and say hi. Don’t blow by them at top speed (you’ll get that KOM next time…), ignore their hello, or grumble at them. Certainly don’t yell at them and tell them they don’t belong in the woods or on “your” trails. Just be nice. Our trails depend on it.

—Mike

NEW HAMPSHIRE / VT

President: Mike Davern, bknemba@gmail.com
VP: Kristine Reilly
Treasurer: Peter Schrader
Secretary: Shari LaPierre
Facebook: Brattleboro-Keene NEMBA

Josh Reynolds, Aaron Willard, and Brad Laakso Kicking 2019 to the Curb. Photo by Mike Davern

Peter Poanessa. Photo by Mike Davern

Winter riding has been most excellent. This year we have been able to spend more time riding than grooming. The snow timing, amounts, and consistency has allowed us to ride the trails in more times than not. We would all rather ride our bikes than snowshoe! Jay Noseworthy has stepped in to help this year, lending Peter Poanessa a hand in running the Snowdog for those storms that do require a groom. Peter greatly appreciates the help.

The big news this year will be the Keene Bike Park at Wheelock. The Keene Bike Park is a joint project of Brattleboro-Keene NEMBA and the City of Keene, New Hampshire to build a fun, family-oriented park where people of all ages can learn, play, and enjoy bike-related activities. We are working with Powder Horn Trail Company of Belmont, NH to design and build the bike park. Find out more about the bike park, and how you can help make it happen, at https://www.keenebikepark.org/

With the recent shake up at Kingdom Trails in regards to the 3 (now 4?) large landowners closing their trails to mountain bikers, I got to thinking about how good we have it here in that we don’t have these types of problems. But I figured I’d do a little post on the socials anyway and remind everyone that it is good to be nice since you never know who you are interacting with out on the trails, and because life is just easier when you are nice…

But then I paused for a second and recalled that we do indeed have these issues.

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—Mike
We must say that we are pretty excited about our new fat biking trails and grooming. Fat biking is brand new to us this year and we really were not sure how it was going to go. It has taken right off and there are tons of people out enjoying the trails. One of our newest board members Tim Clough, who also owns Iron Furnace Brewing here in Franconia, has been helping us out with grooming efforts using his Rokon. Bob from White Mountain Bike Shop has also been a huge factor in making sure the trails are groomed so everyone can enjoy them. We couldn’t be any happier to see the amount riders out on the trails and hear all the positive feedback. We really owe thanks to Tim and Bob for all their time and effort to make winter riding in the Franconia area happen.

As I write this, we are in the middle of planning our first Fat bike event to raise money for our trails and for the town recreation department to help get a warming hut for the ice-skating rink. We are happy to be able to partner with the community to do joint events that support not only the trails, but the community who uses them. We will tell you how it goes in the next issue!

As spring is not too far off in the distance, we are looking forward to being part of Ride The Borderlands Tour again this year. It was awesome to have been part of the tour last year, and we were extremely happy to welcome so many new riders to our trails. We hope that you will follow us on Facebook and check the FA-NEMBA page to see when our Borderlands ride, as well as our other events, will be. We are excited to get our group rides up and running (or should we say riding) again this year. We are also planning some trail workdays and other special events. We hope that you will come visit with us on the trails soon.
Get out and....

If you did not attend our Full Send release at Backyard Brewery last year, you missed out on a good time. On release day, we conducted group rides at various venues throughout the chapter, then we all converged on the Brewery for a release party. The riding and the festivities were fantastic. Because, the event was so much fun and successful, we are going to do another release this year; only it will be bigger and better. Stay tuned to Singletracks, our Facebook page and the NEMBA webpage for details.

We all enjoy riding among the hundreds of miles of trails throughout New England. Many of us are actively involved in trail building and maintenance in our local State Park or Town Forest. But only a few of us have been able to create a new trail network on a piece of public land.

Those of you who have read our chapter’s segment over the past year, or have followed Trailforks or Strava, are aware of the new trail network in Windham, NH. What a few of our members did there is a great example of civic engagement that produced another riding venue in the Rt93 corridor of southern NH.

As active citizens of Windham, Derek Monson, Matt Gaudio, and Ted and Karen Korza learned about a land parcel purchase that the town made to expand conservation land near the high school. Knowing the town was seeking to create recreation opportunities on the land, they envisioned a mountain trail network.

Derek and Matt contacted the town’s Conservation Commission to share their vision. They were able to secure a spot on the agenda of a Commission meeting and, with Derek presenting a plan and the others in attendance for support. After the Commission granted their approval, the next step, a pitch to the trail commission, was also successful. Derek then reached out to the town manager, who wanted a list of volunteers and a scope-of-work summary. Derek also ensured that the Selectman were aware of, and approved, volunteer work on town land.

What followed next was a tremendous amount of on-the-ground trail design and building. Our chapter’s master trail builder, Pete Burant led these efforts and helped to make the most of the volunteer hours of Matt, Derek, the Korzas, Danny Antil, Oliver Liu and Windham high school students. In true fashion for Pete, however, he spent a huge amount of time building the network that he designed. The result is a very fun trail system in a very accessible and beautiful parcel of land. One trail segment even passes a rope swing at a pond that will likely get some use this summer.

The team is currently working on mapping and signage, the latter with the assistance of a local Boy Scout troop. Everyone is optimistic and eager to work on phase two, additional trails on adjoining land to the west.

We all can learn from what this dedicated group did in their town. They had been active in their community and saw an opportunity to create something new. They methodically and thoroughly engaged with the land manager, the town of Windham, in this case. They presented their vision in a compelling manner, showing how they could achieve the town’s vision and do so without spending any tax dollars. They ensured that mountain bikers were present in public meetings for support.

If this small group of passionate mountain bikers was able to create new bike trails in their backyard, so can you. Stay, or get, engaged in local government. Create a plan that is consistent with your community’s vision. Don’t hesitate to draw upon NEMBA’s leadership for guidance or other NEMBA members for support and trail work.

If you want to visit the Windham trail network, the trailhead, with parking, is on Old London Bridge Road, in Windham, NH.

See you on the trails!

—Dan Dwyer
Well winters on it’s way out and it’s been a good one if you’re riding a MTB in RI. With little snow and the frozen trails which ride great made it a good mtbing winter. The packed trailheads on weekends confirm winter MTB’ing is a RI thing.

What we did:
The Woody Hill Fun Ride was a great event again. Thanks to the town of Westerly for their support of RI Nemba in asking us to build these trails and allowing the fun rides. This was the second one held here and it was a huge success. As riders we can thank Glenn Tourtellot for the hundreds of hours and money he has put into making this area great. Also the usual band of volunteers who put up and pull arrow, obtain permit and insurance, man the registration tent and water stop, make the maps and GPX files as well as organize Porta johns, food trucks and all the other things that make this work. We asked riders to drop some money in the bucket to contribute to the Johncake food bank in Westerly and we were able to donate $2100. Woody Hill Fun ride, making it better. The fun ride was a great event but two of our board members noticed a guy on an adaptive bike going against the arrows during the ride. They stopped and spoke with him and he was loving the event but had to turn around because he couldn’t get over one of the stone walls. After the event it did not sit well that a guy could not appreciate the ride as well as everybody else because he had a disability. We tracked him down and asked what we could do so that he could complete the route. A little trail work to change the profile of the top of the rocks in the fences to accommodate the longer wheelbase. open a few tight sections and a couple of small B lines made that possible. Thanks to some volunteers, and Chris Quirk test riding as we worked, two trails are now friendlier to adaptive bikes. Woody Hill Fun ride.

Double Black Diamond.
Bridge Replacement for DEM at Arcadia. In an effort to foster a mutually beneficial relationship with RI DEM we agreed to provide labor to replace a bridge by the Browning Mill Pond Hatchery. The state provided the material and we provided the labor. The old bridge was in poor shape and bordering on dangerous. The bridge was removed and replaced in one day with time leftover for adult beverages. Only one person went swimming on a cold day but we encouraged him to work faster to keep warm.

Funds collected at the Big River Fun ride have been used to buy $1500 of new high quality bike which will be used for both the Meeting Street School rides and those done by the Red Shed in Providence for their youth program.

Roger Williams Park MTB trail. This spring we Will be building about 1.5 miles of youth oriented trail by the present pump track. This site is covered by dense brush and briars. This will be a tough job to get done. Note of interest, in years past this piece of land was said to be used as the animal graveyard for the Zoo. Alice the Elephant, Rodger Williams Park’s first Elephant, who arrived at the zoo in 1930 is said to be buried there and may still be fertilizing the dense undergrowth. —Chris Hughes

We asked riders to drop some money in the bucket to contribute to the Johncake food bank in Westerly and we were able to donate $2100.
S.O.S.: Support Our Sponsors!

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**$100**
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Highland Mountain Bike Park, Northfield, NH
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Rideaway Adventures, Sandwich, MA
Rose Bike, Orono, ME
Rusty Crank, Topsham, ME
Sansoucy Stone, Worcester, MA
Sea Sports Cyclery & Outdoors, Hyannis, MA
Tri-City Sports, Rochester, NH
Wayfarer Bicycles, New London, CT
West Hill Shop, Putney, VT

NEMBA GEAR AVAILABLE
AT THE NEMBA SHOP
www.nemba.org/shopzone
All NEMBA rides and events are suspended until state and local public health guidelines indicate resumption of activities are safe.

Check nemba.org/mbas for the latest ride schedules.

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9/26/20  Carrabassett Valley, Carrabassett Valley ME, CR NEMBA
10/10/20 Bear Brook Boogie, Allentown NH, Southern NH NEMBA
10/24/20 Wicked Ride of the East, Harold Parker, North Shore NEMBA
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