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The Keene Bike Park is finally open. After years of heads banged against walls, tons of dirt moved, and a million calloused hands, tires are finally on dirt.

- Photos by Christopher David Studios
  @ChristopherDavidStudios, @thepedalingfool
The unfortunate combination of Tropical Storm Isaias and Covid-19 could not stop Fairfield County NEMBA from enjoying CDC-compliant group rides, and finishing our scheduled trail projects - in smaller groups as allowed by NEMBA policy, but over longer periods.

FCNEMBA logged hundreds of man-hours on trail maintenance activities over the last few months. Our chainsaw wizards took out 50+ trees after the storm, and got kudos from both local land managers and trail users including several “thank-yous” in local newspapers. Fairfield County trails got hit worse than Hurricane Sandy but we persevered in groups of 10, and recovered fully over the course of 2 months.

We’ve seen many new mountain bikers on the trails over the last six months, and several have joined up and become active members of the Chapter. This has been one “silver lining” of the ongoing Covid-19 crisis - our small group rides have included some enthusiastic new members including kids, parents, women and men.

We completed our final major trail project in Hemlock Hills in Ridgefield. Hemlock Hills/Pine Mtn/Bennett’s Pond is among the largest contiguous open spaces in Fairfield County and has become very popular. We have been working for many years with the Ridgefield Conservation Commission (RCC) on various trail projects, and this summer we legitimized the last of the old “social” trails. We built several reroutes to reduce erosion and closed some “pop-up” trails to reduce proliferation and help the RCC achieve the natural aesthetic that is the root of their policy.

Our maps guru, Rich Coffey, has worked on getting our trail systems updated on Trailforks. Most of our open spaces have cell-service and having updated maps has been helpful for our new members. Thanks Rich!

Our new merchandise site is now open. Thanks to our Vice President, Gunnar Waldman for bringing this to life! Check out www.fcnemba.org for our new merch.

Coach Monika’s CCAP (Connecticut Cycling Advancement Program) has been keeping to their practice schedule and many young riders are joining regularly. If you have kids ages 9-18, come ride with us!

Our plans for Fall 2020 remain constrained, but we will be offering small-group beginner rides on Saturdays this fall, limited to less than 10. Stay tuned for more on this – and join our FCNEMBA FB group for the most current happenings.

MIKE MALWITZ, PRESIDENT FAIRFIELD COUNTY NEMBA

- Intermediate Group Ride to Pine Mtn. Lookout. Photo by John Sweeney
- Huntington State Park Cleanup. Photo by Mike Malwitz
- Halloween Spirit at Norbrook Farm. Photo by Jonathan Winn
- Blazing New Trails with the RCC. Photo by Mike Malwitz
- Social Ride to Pine Mtn Lookout. Photo by Mike Malwitz
New England Mountain Bike Association
involved, please contact Paula Burton at pburton@nemba.org.

area for trail development. If you know of any place or would like to be presently working with several agencies in that area to locate a suitable trail development in the Kent/Sharon/ New Milford/ Cornwall area. We are helping out with our social media presence.

Rockhouse, Waldo and Trolley Preserve after the storm! Mark will also be and we are having tech shirts made up for everyone who helped at beautiful again! We cannot thank everyone enough!

help was amazing and in 4 days the trails at Rockhouse were back to beau-
tiful again! We cannot thank everyone enough!

Our new board member, Mark Coleman, has designed a great logo and we are having tech shirts made up for everyone who helped at Rockhouse, Waldo and Trolley Preserve after the storm! Mark will also be helping out with our social media presence.

Another item of note; our chapter received a $5000 grant to help trail development in the Kent/Sharon/ New Milford/ Cornwall area. We are presently working with several agencies in that area to locate a suitable area for trail development. If you know of any place or would like to be involved, please contact Paula Burton at pburton@nemba.org.

After an amazing stretch of riding weather, our area was hit by tropical storm Isaias in early August. Waldo, Trolley and Rockhouse both had extensive damage.

With the permission of the land manager, Andy Engle and his crew cleared most of the tree damage, did a few short reroutes and reopened the trails at Waldo. Unfortunately, due to storm damage, excessive use, illegal parking, and massive amounts of garbage, Waldo has been closed on and off, and the gate is now closed every weekend.

At Trolley, Bill Lake and a few others cleared most of the damage, but as of this writing, there was still work to be done and another severe storm hit that area as well.

The first reports of damage at Rockhouse Hill Sanctuary were of heavy amounts of downed trees and debris. Reports and photos came in fast, so did the mountain bikers. With Joe Lanier manning the chain saw, 25 riders with hand tools spread out through the Sanctuary. The amount of help was amazing and in 4 days the trails at Rockhouse were back to beautiful again! We cannot thank everyone enough!

Our new board member, Mark Coleman, has designed a great logo and we are having tech shirts made up for everyone who helped at Rockhouse, Waldo and Trolley Preserve after the storm! Mark will also be helping out with our social media presence.

Moose Hill/Peach Farm Section

This is the story of Adeline Gray and the New Flow Trail. I came across an article about a woman who grew up in Oxford, Connecticut and they called her a local daredevil. In 1942, Adeline Gray was the first person to make a test jump from an airplane using a nylon parachute. On June 6, 1942, 24-year-old made the first live jump at Brainard Field in Hartford, CT. At the time of her jump, she was the only woman licensed parachute jumper in Connecticut. She lived in Hartford and rode a bicycle to her job at Pioneer Parachute in Manchester.

Dave Herde and I decided we needed to build a directional flow trail with drops at Rockhouse and name it Adeline Grey. We laid out the trail and assembled workers.

We were all assigned a task and a section of the trail to build. John Breny built the Johnny Jump. Matt Sarter built and laid out the Sarter Sender. Dave built up The Booter. Matt Tulio and his daughter Page worked tirelessly on the rock roller we call Toad, which is named after the large toad that supervised their work for several days. We all worked on building up the berms. We dug holes, we moved dirt and we piled and buried rocks. Collectively, we put in over 100 hours and it would not have been possible without the volunteers who gave us their time. Many thanks to Mary, Cora, Matt, Page, Matt, Corrin, Andy, Maria, Markus, Johnny G, Scott, Armond, Lisa, Paula, and Ed. Trying to keep people on the trail and avoid the creation of “Strava lines” we built split rail fences along the trail with the downed trees we found while building. They look good and serve a purpose. They are working brilliantly!

The trail is great fun and we get a lot of pleasure watching others enjoy it. The runs down Adeline go by quickly but it’s a short loop around to session it and see if you can rail that berm a little better or get a little more air off the booter. We hope to get back out there and build more of the same and better.

We are also hoping to open the Peach Farm loop by late fall. Check our FB, Instagram, and Twitter for updates, workdays, and events.

HVNEMBA volunteer t-shirts. Design by Mark Coleman
Matt Tulio working on Adeline Grey Trail. Photo by Paula Burton
We MISS our members!!! Which is why the Quiet Corner Chapter decided to apply NEMBA's social distancing recommendations and hold limited group rides and trail work. We had success using Eventbrite registration for up to 10 riders on a weekly basis for Mellow Monday (our most popular ride in the past) as well as the weekly Ladies Ride. Our Mellow Monday was still so popular that we opened up another level ride (“novice” and “intermediate+”) that traveled different routes in Goodwin State Forest to maintain our groups of 10. Our season finale was a ride on the local rail trail to get ice cream. We welcomed a number of new riders this year, as getting outdoors (and on bikes) has become so popular. We held our first “Rookie Ride” in August, which brought newbies who traveled from afar to try mountain biking. We see the interest and hope to do more beginner/novice rides starting back up in the spring.

Thanks to Heather Merson, we are selling blaze orange neck gaiters/buffs with our logo on them that work great as “on-the-trail” masks. Covid 19 sucks, to put it bluntly, but we can be safe and have fun on the trails with some wise restrictions. Some members who still feel group rides are too much togetherness were able to meet us on Zoom chapter meetings. We miss them in person but completely understand and support their choices.

We will hold our annual “Walktober” ride on October 3rd at Goodwin State Forest, part of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor event (in its 30th year!). We will have two groups of 10, one novice/beginner level and an intermediate and up group. These are free, guided rides open to all. Eventbrite registration is required. More details are available on our page on the NEMBA website.

Many of our members did trail work on their own this year, after several storms with high winds wreaked havoc in the woods filled with dead trees from past gypsy moth infestations. We thank everyone who played picked up and cleared deadfall to make trails safer. Some members also collected garbage left by outdoors newbies, who don’t seem to realize that if you don’t clean up after yourself, it ruins the outdoors for everyone.

In early September we held an organized trail work day in Old Furnace State Park using NEMBA’s Eventbrite registration. We broke into groups and headed out to different areas of the park and got a lot accomplished, cleaning up trails that hadn’t seen many riders, clearing sticks and branches, and performing some repair work on an old bridge.

Quiet Corner NEMBA has decided to hold our annual Fun Ride as a virtual ride and fundraiser during the month of October. The Tour de Quiet Corner will offer planned routes accessible on Trailforks in each of our riding locations: Old Furnace, Goodwin, West Thompson Dam, Mansfield Hollow, Pachaug and Nathan Hale. Each route will have a suggested ride level, parking location, places to find local food and bike shops, and a chance to make a donation to support our chapter. We will offer raffle prizes to anyone who donates, rides all 6 parks and posts pix on our Facebook page. Take a ride to northeast CT and see what we have to offer. We appreciate your support!

CRIS CADIZ
The fall riding season is quickly coming to an end and the short days and cold nights of winter are fast approaching. Last chance to get in those epic rides before the leaves camouflage the trails and the first snowfall blankets everything in white. The seasons are changing, so shift gears, get the lights charged, the fat bike tuned and the snowshoes at the ready.

Although work is still ongoing, congratulations are due to the group behind NW CT’s newest sanctioned mountain biking trail system. Utilizing properties owned by the Army Corp of Engineers and the Town of Thomaston, CT, Northfield Brook Lake creates a trail system of roughly 6+ miles of mountain bike specific singletrack. The terrain is varied and offers a great combination of twisty flowing singletrack and punchy climbs with plenty of interesting features along the way. Thanks to Greg Blasko, Tim Jackson and Joshua Russman for all your hard work.

To date this year, hundreds of man hours have been volunteered at our trail networks and the trails really show all the hard work. Many thanks to all the volunteers who have contributed their precious time, materials, and resources to help make the mountain bike trails in Northwest Connecticut as great as they are. I would like to especially thank the many volunteers who donated time and equipment to clean up the trail systems in the aftermath of tropical storm Isaias. Despite many still suffering hardships caused by the storm, the outpouring of assistance helped clear most trails of blockages and debris in less than a week. In many cases trails were reported to be riding better after the cleanup efforts. Enormous thanks to all who pitched a hand in the effort. Sometimes it takes a village.

In Burlington, work is beginning to ramp up on the Johnnycake Mountain project. Although slowed by the Corona Virus and the restrictions imposed to prevent its spread, much of the planning work is complete and steps are being taken to begin its implementation. The signature trail grant awarded by NEMBA this spring will provide the ability to fully develop the great potential that exists in this outstanding terrain. Hope everyone is enjoying the preliminary loop but stay tuned as many more great things are yet to come.

As we pedal into the late fall a reminder that we are also entering into the heart of hunting season. Please take a few moments to review some basic hunting safety and the Connecticut rules and regulations. A little knowledge on this front can help keep you safe while you are out enjoying the woods. Know the different hunting seasons and where hunting is allowed in relation to bike/hiking trails and try to cater your ride plans to reduce conflict with the hunters.

Here’s a couple tips that will help:

- Avoid riding during peak hunting times, early morning/evening hours.
- Ride in areas where hunting is not allowed
- Wear an article of bright orange clothing
- Avoid wearing items that are white, brown or red.
- Plan epic rides for Sunday when hunting is not allowed in Connecticut.

The hunting season is short and enjoyed by many so please show this group respect. Let us try to give them the ability to enjoy the forest during this short window of time as much as we do the rest of the year. By being informed and respectful, we as mountain bikers can generate much good will between the user groups. As always respect gets respect.

JON REGAN
President
JONATHAN REGAN
Treasurer
CARA REGAN
Secretary
BRIAN VIBERT

New England Mountain Bike Association
The air is cooling and we are just beginning a beautiful fall riding season, our escape from the heavy and complex conditions we have faced so far in 2020. The global pandemic has limited our group rides and travel opportunities, and on a local level have greatly reduced the number of organized events our chapter has held. Our SECT NEMBA chapter’s annual Bluff Point Mountain Bike Adventure Series ride was cancelled for this year, but we are using the time to plan a great event for the future. We are welcoming many new riders as bicycles of all kinds have flown off the shelves at all our local bike shops. Remember to reach out to Wayfarer in New London or Airline Cycles in East Hampton, our NEMBA supporting shops, for maintenance or buying interest.

The increased numbers of mountain bikers in our area can increase the wear and tear on our trails, but also provide an opportunity to engage new volunteers to help clear trails and advocate for access. The team did an excellent job coordinating storm clean-up efforts following tropical storm Isais impact in our regional trail systems in early August. Stewards worked with our land management contacts at Mooween, Bluff Point and Haley Farm, Hartman Park and the Goodwin trail and cleared trails in impressive timeframes meeting the needs of our trail communities to get outside. We remind all those interested in helping clear trails to contact SECT NEMBA and ALWAYS get direct land manager approval to clear trails particularly if it involves chainsaw efforts, we can help you do this! We’ve continued to grow our tool crib with electric trimmers and hand tools, even a few backpack leaf blowers to allow multiple teams out to work.

Brett Severson has organized a Game of Logging Level 2 training to take place in October for many of our experienced and dedicated trail system stewards to gain additional chainsaw expertise and better serve our land managers. Our incredible partners, Groton Open Space Association, has provided two spots in their upcoming Game of Logging Level 1 training to two SECT NEMBA volunteers, expanding the number of certified stewards who can support work on state/land trust lands.

Several land managers have been reaching out to SECT NEMBA recently with requests to support trail maintenance and enhancement efforts. Brett Severson and Kim Bradley supported the Eightmile Wild and Scenic Watershed on rock work to enhance a re-route of the Goodwin Trail through the Eightmile River Wildlife Management Area in East Haddam to allow bike passage.

The Town of Groton and CTDEEP reached out to SECT NEMBA’s stewards Tim Wilson and Jimmy Klose to organize trail maintenance this fall focused on enhancements to a main trail in Haley Farm State Park, helping maintain a portion of Groton’s X-town trail. Brett and Tina Severson as representatives and supported by SECT NEMBA are working diligently on advocacy efforts focused on Grayville Falls trails system, please stay tuned as we may need full community support as this work continues. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for information concerning fall and winter trail work days supporting many of the existing and developing trail systems in our region.

Most of our organized rides did not take place this summer as we encouraged social distancing throughout our community. Facing all the challenges, Jessica Robison and Amanda Arling, worked hard to organize several successful and fun Novice/Beginner Women’s Rides. These events have encouraged and organized our local female riders to hit the trails with confidence, and we cannot wait to expand these opportunities.

As a final note, Bluff Point MBAS event is usually a major source of new and renewal of memberships for our chapter, we ask all our members to check on the membership status and please support NEMBA through these trying times as we all face COVID-19. Let’s find ways to keep the connected within our mountain bike community and support trail stewardship and advocacy when it is needed most!

KIM BRADLEY

- Kim Bradley dropping in at Grayville Falls. Photo by Tina Severson
- Clearing storm trees and debris. Photo by Wendy Hill
- Bob and Parker Cope clear a large tree in Hartman Park, Lyme, CT following Tropical Storm Isais. Photo by Wendy Hill
It’s been a tricky summer for us. While everyone is out enjoying the trails we’ve shied away from any group activities. That’s not to say the trails have been lying fallow but our usual weekly rides, Women’s Clinic, Treadfest and other races have been postponed till next year.

Well almost all riding activities, we are still running the end of season Odyssey. It’s Covid friendly by design with individuals, families, covid pods in mind. Details are still forthcoming but rumor has it there will be prizes just no party at the end of the day.

Trail building, however, is another story. We found our stride quickly with socially distanced Tuesday Night Trails. This has perhaps been our most productive season so far. A dry summer, coupled with the lack of other group activities has swelled the ranks of volunteers. We’ve had a paid trail crew again this year complete with an incredible crew leader, Will Libby. Not only does Will build excellent trails, he is teaching a young crew about the craft and other life lessons. In addition to the crew we’ve had board member Brian Alexander using a mini excavator, affectionately named Mary Ann, to carve even the most troublesome sections into some very sweet features and flow.

Some of the more notable achievements:

- Titcomb Mountain, Farmington. We were tasked by the landowners to make the trails even more accessible to the average biker. Despite knowing there are no average bikers we managed to reroute a few problem areas, finish the Miracle Mile down the front of the mountain and update, almost literally, tons of trail surface. Many thanks to E.L. Vining & Son of Farmington for their generous donation of 40 yards of custom aggregate. It’s a magic mixture which sticks like glue to the trail.
- Mt Apatite, Auburn. It was the saddest of days last April when we lost our friend, fellow biker and one of the most inspiring people you’d ever meet, Carrie Boudrea, to cancer. Carries enthusiasm was unshakable and we thought a new trail would be a fitting tribute. By the time you read this “Carrie On” at Mt Apatite will be complete.
- While our money raising events have been curtailed this year we had an anonymous donation of $100,000 to match funds towards our future trail building. Now for the next 5 years every donation you make towards CeMNemba will go twice as far! Ride as often as you can! IAN

Safron gets a photo op with Mary Ann. Photo by Ian Ogilvie
It was a busy summer in the Carrabassett Valley Region with outdoor recreation becoming more popular than ever. The late season months of August and September, and even October, are prime time for riding in New England, and so far, this season is no exception. We were lucky with very dry conditions early this spring and summer, and as the season continued rainfall was rare but welcomed.

We want to thank all the folks that came out and volunteered time to clean up the trails early in the season. This year volunteer efforts took on a more “self-guided” approach, which worked well. Folks were given maintenance assignments and completed the work when their schedule permitted. Many folks also self-performed blowdown removals while out on the trail. Hopefully this fall and winter season are kind to the trails in the blowdown department. Thanks to all that put in time towards these efforts.

The Town trail crew was busy this summer down on the newly Town acquired Jones property. This is located down off the southern sector of the Narrow Gauge Trail, south of the Carriage Road. This trail, “Kitty Hawk”, came out great with bermed turns as the trail climbs part way up the ridge before making a fun descent down to the Narrow Gauge.

In September the trail crew moved up to the newest project zone in the area known as Stoney Brook, which straddles Wyman Township and the Town of Carrabassett Valley on the south side or Route 27. Planning, permitting, and fundraising have been ongoing for over a year. This year marked some great progress in those departments, and it is exciting to finally get dirt moved around up there. Look for more details and updates on this new development in 2021.

A couple of new riding elements were added in the Kingfield zone as well. One at the Maine Beer Shed, which is a kid friendly pump track. Thanks to Kate and Brian of the Beer Shed for procuring dirt for this track and to local volunteers who shaped it into something cool. With some luck the pump track will be expanded next season. Work has also been underway to develop beginner trail along the West Branch of the Carrabassett River. Earlier this summer volunteers carved out a section of trail and landowner permission talks are ongoing to expand in this area. Stay tuned for more info regarding this.

Riding in Carrabassett Valley occurs on a vast area of trails covering many square miles. Somewhat unique in New England, this wide area is owned by just a handful of landowners, including the Town of Carrabassett Valley, the Penobscot Nation, Sugarloaf, the Sanitary District and The State of Maine, among others. We are very grateful for the use of this land and the ability to develop new trails and ride existing corridors. It is more important than ever that we respect these lands and treat it as if it is your own. Please be mindful of this as you are out and about, be nice to others recreating and be respectful of the resources and land.

CRNEMBA was super lucky to receive funding from multiple grant sources this past year, but have also received many donations from local riders, community members and businesses. For the third year in a row Allspeed Cyclery and Snow made a sizeable donation to CRNEMBA. Huge thanks for this and to all our donors, big and small. Every little bit helps! We try to keep a list of donors updated on carrabassettmemba.org, be sure to check it out and thanks these folks if you run into them.

It will not be long before snow flies and talk turns to fat bikes, winter grooming and Nordic skiing in the Valley. The CRNEMBA team hopes you are all safe, active and are getting outside as much as possible!

WARREN GEROW
The last few months have been strange; scary, unsettling, stressful and unpredictable. But through it all the woods have been the woods, the singletrack has remained, and riding bikes has proven itself to be the medicine we need to tune out all the noise and clatter of these crazy times.

I know I am not alone in feeling like riding bikes on the regular has kept my head from exploding. Even though Six Rivers had to scale back or cancel most of our group rides and trail work days, our chapter and our trails saw a big uptick in interest and use.

As our network of riders expands and solidifies, smaller tasks like clearing fallen trees and hauling lumber from the trailheads to worksites are getting taken care of quickly. Our amazing volunteers have been fired up to help out however they can, logging over 350 hours this summer! We focused a lot of our energy on continuing the evolution of the Topsham Ponds trail system this season. Thanks to donations of material, time, machinery, expertise and crazy ideas, these trails now have some berms, dirt rollers, wooden a-frames, a couple of drops and two tabletop jump lines. A community member who discovered the Topsham trails with her son was so thrilled that she wrote us this message:

A couple of other ways Six Rivers is connecting with the community is through our annual fundraiser and our programming for kids. Over the summer I ran a program for 10 middle schoolers in conjunction with the Midcoast Community Alliance. We used our fleet of Specialized hardtails that I received as part of the Riding For Focus grant, and had great help from our high school volunteer, Ollie Bateman, riding two days a week. Two other board members, Ernie Phillips and Kris Haralson are currently running youth mountain biking clinics in Brunswick and Topsham with a total of 22 kids riding each week. When our in-person fundraiser got tabled due to the quarantine we decided to harness our outreach to raise money for both the chapter and a local charity. We designed some cool hats and water bottles for folks to receive in exchange for a donation to the chapter. During the month of September, 50% of all proceeds from the fundraiser will be donated to The Bath Area Food Bank, a local pantry for food insecure families. The food bank is grateful for our help as so many folks are struggling to make ends meet during the pandemic. If you’d like to get some of the limited edition swag while it’s still available, check it out at sixriversnemba.org.

As the days continue to get shorter and the smell of wood smoke is carried by fall breezes, we find ourselves thinking about Babe and Charlene, our two SnowDogs who have been in hibernation. Once the snow flies our crack team of volunteer dog drivers will be grooving close to 20 miles of sloopo frozen fun in Topsham, Bath and Brunswick.

We are looking forward to a time when we can all just ride together again, without thinking about social distancing and virus clouds. Until then, keep on riding on your own or enjoy the company of your pod, however they may be. LAWRENCE KOVACS

-American singletrack board member, Bill Milam, showing the Bath middle schoolers how to hit the boardwalk gap on A.L.A.rhythm, a classic techy test piece in Bath, Maine. Photo by Lawrence Kovacs

-A rider trying out one of the new tabletop jumps at Topsham Ponds. Photo by Kristian Haralson

-The letter from community member, Jen V. about discovering the Topsham trails with her son.

#“We went to Topsham Ponds on Wednesday and had such a blast. I am so grateful for experiences like this. My son is 8, heading into the 4th grade, and I know that the days when his definition of fun includes going for a bike ride with mom are numbered. So I really savor and try to memorize experiences like this. At a time when there is so much uncertainty and chaos and worry, the ability to get into a beautiful place for some incredible fun and exhilaration with the people I love are such a gift and so healing. I am especially appreciative of having an activity like this that builds confidence, character and stokes joy, especially at a time when all of the experiences we typically rely on for that— little league, soccer, theater camp, school— have been cancelled. The trails are designed with so much intelligence. So many doable challenges. And now we’ve done enough mountain biking to know what a rare gem that is. I am in awe of the work you’ve done to bring this to life. It took so much vision to see that some town-owned land by the dump was actually a majestic natural playground just waiting to be explored. And it took so much time, commitment, hard physical labor, generous volunteers, and money to bring that vision to life. You also had the foresight to see that the future of the sport is as much about creating spaces that are accessible for newcomers as it is about creating trails for seasoned athletes. I can’t give enough money to make a difference. But if there’s anything I ever can do to advance your mission or help you, please don’t hesitate to reach out. You all are doing so much good in the world.”

JEN V.
Greetings from the Valley. While the Summer was kind of a bust, most of you made the best of it and rode in small groups on a regular basis. We built a bridge on a connector trail between Ribbon Candy and Goat Hill to skirt a big mud puddle that was driving riders off property. A big thanks to Mike Tonry for leading the charge on that build. We also got a new double hourglass bridge built on the Mike Trail at West Hill Dam. This new bridge spans a seasonally wet area and should allow us to keep the Mike Trail open all year. It is very easy to roll across and provides a small perceived challenge to those who fear tight bridges. We were able to build a new bridge in the Ashland Town Forest on land managed by the Sudbury Valley Trustees. Talk about building bridges. Typically the SVT lands are not welcome to mountain biking but this system is open to mountain bikers and the SVT gave us the thumbs up on our construction of the new bridge. If you haven’t been to the Ashland Town Forest, you should try to find the time. It’s not a destination but it is referred to by the local mountain bikers as a hidden gem.

Thanks to a portion of the Gangemi Family we were able to safely and distantly reroute the entrance to the Alpha Trail at West Hill Dam. A small project that the Rangers asked for our help with.

Coming up we have a new kiosk in the works that will be installed at the Alpha Trailhead at West Hill Dam. It will be built to a similar standard as the mighty kiosks at Mendon Town Forest and will feature a bike stand and tool station mounted to the back side. The tool station was donated by Pedro’s. We hope to have this project completed by the end of October.

The next bridge on the list will replace the short two plank temporary bridge on the Oscar Trail. The new bridge will be a few hundred yards south of the large bridge on Oscar. We are in negotiations with a Boy Scout to build the bridge as part of his Eagle Scout Project. The plan for this bridge is to mimic the style of the Centrifuge Bridge at Pine Hills Park in Vermont. We are just in the planning stages for this one but hope to complete it by the end of this year. Momentum is Your Friend.

BRIAN

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BRIAN FORESTAL
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KRIS MUNROE
Cape Cod NEMBA would first like to thank the members of our Chapter for their membership. Currently we have 158 paid members and our goal for this year is to get to 200. We are only 42 memberships away from this goal.

What an amazing summer we had on Cape Cod with our beautiful hot and sunny weather! We had almost no rainfall and very little humidity which set us up for great riding in the woods, on the trails and on the beach.

We received fantastic news in the spring! We were notified that our Chapter won a $5,000 grant from NEMBA for the construction of a viewing platform at Maple Swamp in Sandwich. The platform will be similar to “walker deck” at West Barnstable and have distant views of Cape Cod Bay. The town of Sandwich has approved us to build a 3-mile bike trail from the Maple Swamp parking lot to the peak of Sam Nye and back down. Construction and build out will be in the fall of 2020.

COVID-19 has increased trail usage by many walkers, hikers, families and mountain bike riders. CC NEMBA has remained busy with trail maintenance and projects despite COVID-19 but keeping safety protocols for our members always in mind. We worked with the Sandwich Recreation Department on a successful summer mountain bike program. The program had COVID-19 protocols such as temperature checks and paperless sign-in. We had 24 kids sign up for this six-week program held on Wednesdays from 5-6 p.m. at the Oak Ridge School. The kids had a blast riding the newly built trails in Sandwich. On the last day of the program we had a special visit from the ice cream truck.

Due to COVID-19 we paused our Chapter Meetings this summer. We did have one in June at Hathaway’s Pond and rode some of the new trails in the Hathaway’s area. Speaking of Hathaway’s, we have made great progress with the Barnstable Recreation Department and installed a new trail off Pinney’s Lane called Pint-Side trail. Cape Cod Beer is right across the street and Hathaway’s offers freshwater swimming. What more could you ask for on a hot day on Cape Cod?

We would like to thank our member, Lev Malakhoff, for all the hard work he is doing with new trail projects near Hathaway’s, Old Jail Lane and on the Trayser Trail in West Barnstable. We will have many exciting projects to announce this fall. Many of our members turned out for a trail maintenance day at Old Jail Lane and we bench cut a section of the Fin’s Folly trail and added some berms.

We received permission from the 300 Club to add a wooden bridge to a perpetually muddy section of the Moraine Trail in Falmouth. Dave LaFreniere was able to install a 16’ x 2’ bridge to make passage through this muddy section much cleaner. Dave has also been doing a tremendous amount of work on the Trail Forks App to update our trails at Otis and South of Otis (SOS). In addition, he has created two incredible loops through the Moraine parcel known as the Four and Five Circles of Hell. If you’re feeling up for an incredible day of climbing and exploring the Falmouth, MA area you should check them out.

The Town of Barnstable informed us that the conservation area formerly known as Trail of Tears has been officially changed to West Barnstable Conservation Area (WBCA). We updated all the maps and informed our members of the name change.

We were able to put the finishing touches on the kiosk at the Big Ring parking lot at WBCA. Perry Ermi and Mike Dube did a great job of putting on cedar shingles and moisture proof siding.

This fall we are excited to submit a master plan to the town of Barnstable with some recommendation for improvements on washed out trails, re-routes and signage. Stay tuned for more updates on this.

- Summer riding on the Cape with the kids from the Sandwich Recreation program. Photo by Frank Merola
- The kids getting ready to roll-out on the Sandwich Recreation Program. Photo by Frank Merola
- New bridge at the Moraine Trail. Thanks to and photo by Dave LaFreniere.
Fill in the blank: “The Best Laid Plans…”

The summer of 2020 will surely go down as the season with as many twists and blind turns as the gnarliest mtb excursion. We made plans for the summer and we scrapped plans – again and again. The overriding cool thing though, was the people in GB NEMBA kept on riding. We held out hope and watched transmission rate maps and discussed group rides…is it safe yet? Can we go to KT yet?

When I look back on these months of social distancing I am deeply proud of the way NEMBA and our Greater Boston chapter rose to the occasion. We held our chapter meetings over ZOOM and continued to engage. Many of us missed gathering in throngs of sweat soaked chami shorts, scarfing down greasy pizza in school parking lots after epic rides. While others of us savored the reprieve from the crowded rides, or pressure of pounding adrenalin group rides that launch at unsustainable speeds. So to those of you who loved Summer 2020 and those who distinctly did not, let’s revel in a sampling of what was memorable.

A terrific crew of GB NEMBA-ers hosted 12 trailwork days, totaling approximately 185 volunteer hours, and engaging 62 volunteers (many repeats) pinching in trails, shutting down cut-throughs, repairing erosion, working on getting water off the trails, and reinforcing rock armoring. Thank you Bill Cohn for your stalwart leadership! Bill has also been working on getting water off the trails, and reinforcing rock armoring.

Another dedicated group of volunteers (Corey Bollier, Mark Bialas, Jon Gray, and Mike Tabaczynski) prepared a great proposal of 8 trail improvements for the Middlesex Fells DCR partners, which was well received and in the coming weeks we will be launching a weekly trailwork series at The Fells to chip away at these projects.

While not a headliner here, Beaver Brook/Western Greenway delivered countless hours of happy riders, zipping in and around the overgrown poison ivy, daring us not to dab as we dove deeply into the peace of this treasure just outside of the city. A couple GB NEMBA trail diviners are churning up some great ideas for expanded routes further out.

Heeding to concerns from shop owners and NEMBA members alike, Greater Boston identified a big need to get the lessons of “sharing the trails” that can be so easily transmitted to new riders in our group rides – especially to folks who just found their pedal legs and Dad’s old Gary Fisher from the garage (or better yet full-suspension Enduro-bike for their local fire roads) and zig-zagged onto the nearest trail, complete with ear buds and no helmet! How do we help these folks? Well, we started to make mini-selfie videos and streamed them together into short educational vignettes for mountain bikers and trail users of every sort. They are now hosted on our re-launched NEMBA YouTube Channel for your viewing and enjoyment! It took – and we will miss him dearly. Many suggestions for memorializing Eddie have been proposed and we look forward to defining an enduring legacy and spirit that Eddie brought to us.

In closing, the temperatures are dropping, the twigs are snapping, and the riding is supreme. May you treasure every moment. High hopes and flexible plans for Fall 2020 to all our sister chapters.

MARY MCCARTHY

We have had some lively discussions on social media about our videos. In fact, Video #2 drew a heated debate (some great suggestions, observations, and some real tension) however it needed to be reigned in, upholding a community value of respecting that NEMBA comprises a broad swath of the population and that tolerance and respect are vital – especially across our differences (old school vs new school, age, gender, and race) especially over the ever-volatile platform of social media. On that front, GB NEMBA is engaged in ongoing conversations about inclusivity and what we can do to make NEMBA a welcoming community for all to find their love of mountain biking – in our marketing, in our language and in our actions. May everyone feel welcomed into our numbers and may our common passion unify us.

We cannot close out the summer without taking pause to recognize the passing of one of our beloved members – Eddie Tyrance, on August 24. Featured in SingleTracks photo Issue 163. Excerpt from Facebook:

If ever there was a soul cut from the cloth of kindness and openness it was Eddie - he was the embodiment of enthusiasm, positivity, and generosity. Eddie took to mountain biking with boundless energy - up for anything, always ready to ride. An early joiner to the Fells 2020 working group, a regular at the GB NEMBA Trailwork Snip & Clips, and a leading actor in the GB NEMBA trail-tips videos - Eddie’s willingness to help out could not be contained. The kind of guy who would go home after a ride and look up that piece of gear, that new riding technology or gadget, and eagerly fill you in on in next time you met up. Many a ride was made better by his playful spirit and infectious laugh. We invite you to share your “Riding with Eddie” pictures in the comments.

To all who knew and loved Eddie – we extend our deepest condolences. A quick scan of his Facebook page will show he was beloved by many in circles far beyond NEMBA, though his impact on many of us in GB NEMBA was tremendous. He surely brought more to the table than he took - and we will miss him dearly. Many suggestions for memorializing Eddie have been proposed and we look forward to defining an enduring way to celebrate his joyful impact on so many of us in NEMBA.

In closing, the temperatures are dropping, the twigs are snapping, and the riding is supreme. May you treasure every moment. High hopes and flexible plans for Fall 2020 to all our sister chapters.

MARY MCCARTHY

Eddie Tyrance – Ride in Peace
It’s been a different kind of summer this year in the Pioneer Valley. Family and solo adventures have replaced the usual group rides, and trail maintenance has been a mostly DIY affair. Despite the changes, the trails have been busy with new and seasoned riders alike, all out to soak up the season of Excellent Riding Conditions. Evolving MTB fashion has kept us on our toes, as riders and other trail users don face masks to reduce COVID-19 risk on tight trails. Bonus - less need for sunscreen.

The PV NEMBA Facebook page has been busy with lots of folks looking for good places to ride with beginners and kids. Bear Hole in West Springfield, Robinson Park in Agawam, the Canal Trails in Belchertown, and Chicopee State Park were recommended as (mostly) flat, flowy, and fun places to try out some singletrack.

Thank you to all the stealth handsaw-ers, brush clearers, and chainsaw junkies who helped keep trails in ripping condition through the August thunderstorm season. It’s been great to see people posting about downed trees, and sharing areas they’ve cleared so others know where it’s clear to ride. Special shout-out to local NEHSCA team the Gateway Gear Grinders for their work clearing Bear Hole; we love to see the next generation of riders helping to support their sport!

A long-awaited bridge replacement and trail reroute at the popular Earl’s Trails in Hadley has greatly improved access from Chmura road to the lower trails. The bridge was built to bypass the old “swoopy bridge,” which took trail users through an eroded stream bank and over a ladder bridge which has seen a number of replacements, modifications, and repositioning over the years. It was time to address the problem both from a trail experience and an ecological standpoint.

Over the last three years PV NEBMA leadership has discussed and planned ideas for fixing this problem with the trail builders/maintainers, Hampshire College, Kestrel Land Trust, and Town of Hadley’s Conservation Commission. The solution was a full reroute upstream for a shorter, more manageable crossing. The new trail route and bridge will keep users from compacting and eroding the stream banks and slopes and will remain stable for many years to provide a consistent trail experience each time we cross it.

A crew of dedicated volunteers led by PV NEMBA president Jonathan Mauterer helped make the project happen: Leigh Gehringer-Wiar brought out her Pedal People trailer to help bring the 12 foot supporting timbers. Robin Armstrong and VP Kait Kehoe got to the site early Saturday morning and had a clear path to the work site and materials getting moved in before work even got started. Ben Jankowski, Sam Veggeberg, Steve O’Neill, and I helped orchestrate the effort and helped carry, measure, cut, assemble, position (and reposition) and refine the bridge over the course of a weekend. Josh Rice provided lunch and some muscle, both essential ingredients. We even got some ride-by assistance from Jose Gerena; he helped finish up detail cuts, mount some of the final treads, and gave us some muscle when we had all run out on Sunday evening.

Final approval to open the new bridge was Brought to You By Zoom, as Jonathan Mauter called in to the Conservation Commission meeting from the bridge itself. He was able to give a full walk through and site inspection and received approval on the spot (literally). So, thanks 2020?

We’re excited to see the evolution of our trail system as we adapt to the growing number of users who access and enjoy Earl’s Trails. We hope to continue to improve the experience for all of the trail users here and to keep our singletrack sustainable so that we can enjoy it for years to come!

SARA DRAPER, PV NEMBA MEMBER

- Sunris(d)e over the new bridge at Earl’s Trails. Photo by Jonathan Mauterer
- Volunteers Robin Armstrong, Kait Kehoe, Josh Rice, and Leigh Gehringer-Wiar wrangle a 12’ hunk of pressure-treated wood for the bridge project. Photo by Sara Draper
- Mikebob Forest and Jonathan Mauter show off their trail tool carrying strategies. Photo by Mikebob Forest
Wow this year has been different. January we had our First Ride as usual, even if it was a bit wet in Wompy. February we managed to have WinterFest, before the ‘Covid Reality’ set in. We all know the rest. Months of quarantining ourselves, with many of us out of work for indefinite amounts of time. Spinning indoors, alternative workouts, Zoom meetings, baking bread, and lots of family time. Finally we figured out how to interact with one another, with masks and social distancing. Group rides are back in style, with limitations and protocols of course. Everyone is behaving well (ok as well as us mountain bikers can behave ourselves).

Here in Southeast Mass at our Zoom meetings we’ve been able to focus on things like chapter meeting structure and some better ways to communicate internally. We’ve had a huge TrailForks effort by some of our members, so it’s becoming easier to find yourself around. While we haven’t had any formal trail work days since the pre-Covid days, a lot of people have been out there clearing debris and deadfalls as usual, our parks are looking great. On September 20 at Wompy we had three small groups replacing culverts, fixing bridges, and filling holes in South Field and trimming the field perimeter of encroaching undergrowth.

You may have noticed that there are WAY more people on the trails now. Some of us have taken to welcoming these new riders and giving them some good instruction and advice on how to ride and some of the rules of the trail. Some are more experienced and have been happy to have us show them around the parks. Some are creating gps routes to help with ‘virtual’ rides. Then we have our regular riders dedicated to riding and taking care of our parks. Huge thank you to those of you who are helping with these efforts. It’s important to keep the wheels turning!

On a sad note, we lost a lifetime MTB hero, Bill Egan, of Pembroke. Bill was a good riding buddy of Bill Boles, they’d always be conspiring for the where and when of their next ride. Very often you’d see him leading a ride in Wompatuck, Blue Hills, or in Duxbury, Pembroke, the Cape, and Carolina Hills. Bill was a Snap-On Tools dealer, a sports car enthusiast, motocrosser, high-wheel bike rider and of course a talented and energetic mountain biker. One of the first of our generation. His signature was the sugar cookies, a bag of which he always shared after the ride, freshly baked by his wife at the time.

The annual LandMine MTB Classic Race couldn’t be held as usual of course, but BikeBarn’s Kevin Chichlowski and Damon Telepak stepped up even more this year to create The DIY Landmine! A virtual race over the whole month of September, DIY Landmine was a total success. The $10 registration fee from almost 400 riders went right back to Friends of Wompatuck, to be spent on park and trail improvements. Kudos to Kevin, Damon, BikeBarn, Friends of Wompatuck, and SEMass volunteers, for making it happen!

As you know, TrailForks is now the go-to for updated trail information and routes. What you may not know, is that most of our major parks have the most concise, up-to-date trail information possible, and that info is updated regularly as reports come in. What you may not also know is that our TrailForks angels (most notably Tom McKenna, Brian Carlson, Mook Williams and Koene Van Dijk) are now whittling away at all of our smaller parcels, with the same fluidity of updates as the larger parks. That means that you will have a hard time getting lost ANYWHERE in the Southeast Kingdom and Beyond! Because Bill Boles has been very active in mapping trails north (and south and east) of the Cape Cod Canal, all the way up the south shore. If you like what they are doing and you’re loving the trails and routes, you can always donate to the SEMass chapter while using TrailForks!

If I could see into the future, I would also report that there could be a virtual Turkey AfterBurner event in Hale, and that there could be an official Southeast Mass NEMBA Castle Island brew coming up, but we’ll have to wait and see if they happen! Stay Tuned!

STEVE COBBLE

- Peter Williams, Tim Friedmann, Wayne Strohm working on fortifying bridge transitions in Wompatuck. Photo by Steve Cobble
- Doug Luoma and Tom Tutkus replacing worn out culverts in Wompatuck. Photo by Lars Ahlzen

President
STEVE COBBLE
Treasurer
RICHARD HIGGINS
Secretary
TOM MCKENNA
Our behind-the-scenes advocacy work continues despite an upside-down 2020, while our chapter social, ride, and event scene has been on hold. Honestly, I’ve been spending nearly all of my free time outdoors this year, exploring our region and finding amazing sights off the beaten path that beg for trails.

The good news is this break allowed lots of time to make sense of the issues we’re facing. I’m writing a letter to members of the chapter with a plan for making progress despite the surprisingly anti-trail attitudes we’re facing on a regular basis around here. In summary, don’t count us out, not as long as there are as many of us that not only care about, but are vested in, our region’s trail networks and the reasons they matter so much to our communities and our sport. We’ll couple this report with a survey to gauge not only opinions on the possible directions we should take, but also finding creative ways for more people to get involved to make plans a reality. We’ve not been very good at this but it’s time for changes now that we’ve worked within the system and understand how it works. Thank you for your patience as we reboot the chapter to serve our region better.

BRETT R

Area Updates

BARRE - Thanks to the generosity of private landowners and the relationships forged and trails built by Steve Salvadore and crew, there’s now a wonderful trail network on the Barre/Oakham line that is now on Trailforks. One of the highlights here is how the trails can drive support for the small local businesses whose owners allow trail development on their lands. The Quail Hollow Golf & Country Club, for example, recently allowed a trail and 50’ boardwalk on the northern end of the golf course and now invites trail users to use their nearby restroom. Soon, we hope to connect the Rocky Hill trail network to their clubhouse so that riders can end their ride at the restaurant and pub on site. There’s plans to add trails to connect to a local farm stand near Woods Road as well.

HARDWICK - We’re forging a new partnership with East Quabbin Land Trust, whose beautiful trail network is open to passive non-motorized users like us. We’ve discussed a project for the fall, look for more.

HUBBARDSTON SF - We’ve been talking with DCR staff about addressing some sustainability issues, starting with the seasonally muddy Link Trail. We’re scheduling a field visit with them now to discuss options.

LEOMINSTER - We are in talks with city officials and other volunteers about ways to improve trails and begin a broader strategic planning process for trail connectivity on city lands. It’s still early, but we are delighted that constructive conversations are happening.

OAKHAM SF - Back in 2018 we were awarded the largest RTP grant in NEMBA’s history ($50K) to create a new trail network and parking lot on this property. Since that time, the project has been stuck on a red light from DCR, who wants to complete a logging project in the forest before we may begin. We are finally starting to get some traction on this and we’re ensuring the deadlines are extended to accommodate the delays. Keep in mind that the grant has a 20% match, so we will need volunteer time and donations of materials and services to be able to use the whole grant. We will form a new team within the chapter with all of us who wish to be involved in this project, it’s going to be a lot of work that will be worthwhile when we see the results, which will include professional machine built flow trails, a rarity in our area indeed.

TREASURE VALLEY - our first priority project is building a new trail bridge which first requires us to move two 40’ utility poles to the site. We’ve got clearance to accept machine assistance from Stolberg Landscape; owner Dan Stolberg is an active volunteer for the Trails Committee. After the bridge is built in October, we will turn our attention to the newly proposed and approved Upper Heron Loops trail in the lands west of Heron Marsh. Look for work days to be posted to the Trails Committee and our chapter. To all of you unsure of what trails are OK to be on, I hear your plea. The Scout council has recently gone through a merger and is still in the process of changing leadership and adapting to pandemic restrictions, so I’ve been waiting for this to settle.
The 2020 riding season is well... 2020. We have not hosted any official events, but people are riding in small groups. The skills practice features at Russell Mill, built by Marty Engel, have been a huge hit. They were built for a PYT and skill series we were planning. Marty designed the features to be configurable. They have been in different configurations just about every day.

The trail crew has been busy with smaller single person projects. The larger projects are on hold for now. We are at the beginning stages of a major trail signage project at Russell Mill. We have created a new mapping scheme in conjunction with the Chelmsford Fire Department and the Chelmsford Conservation Commission. We will be creating official extraction points, location markings, and marking trails and maps. We hope to create safer trails and increase emergency response times.

The Coronavirus pandemic continues to have a dramatic negative impact on mountain biking in New England with all NEMBA Events cancelled for 2020. Sadly, this includes The Wicked Ride of the East, NSNEMBA’s marquee event of the year, which was cancelled due to the State's ban on gatherings of more than ten people. Visits to State Parks and Forests by the general public, which peaked in the spring, decreased during the summer and are now back to normal. Mountain bikers are less likely to encounter people on the trails but are still being asked to ride in small groups or solo. Large groups are strongly discouraged both on the trails and in the parking lots.

A large project is planned on the border of Skug Reservation (AVIS) and Harold Parker SF in response to flooding due to beaver activity in the area. The project to extend Horndge Bridge, which was approved by the Andover Conservation Commission in June, will require the construction of 100’ of new bridge/boardwalk. It was scheduled for this fall but may be delayed until next year due to a nationwide shortage of decking material that is needed for the project. Andy Sherman, the Project Lead, reports that, “NSNEMBA is now opportunistically acquiring lumber and is set to build in October. We are planning a safe build through the use of small teams working in multiple shifts, PPE, and social distancing.”

A smaller project took place on 19Sep at HPSF to replace an old, deteriorated section of boardwalk near Stearns Pond using decking leftovers from last year. Trail work has been ongoing at Winnekenni Park in Haverhill and a new bridge was built there recently.

Everyone is hoping that group rides, in-person chapter meetings and other NEMBA Events will be allowed to resume in 2021. NSNEMBA had a virtual chapter meeting on 04Aug via Zoom. It was better than nothing but didn’t come close to the convivial, in-person chapter meetings that are always pleasant and fun occasions. Coming for 2021 is the new NSNEMBA Chapter App which will be useful for updates and last minute changes for rides, trail projects and chapter meetings.

HANK KELLS
Our main focus areas this spring and summer have been collaboration with DCR, specifically at Pittsfield State Forest and neighboring Balance Rock, a new partnership with the Town of Lenox and Lenox Watershed, as well as continued work with the Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC), Springside Park, and Kennedy Park. We are also preparing to return to projects with DCR at Beartown State Forest.

In August, Chapter President, Alison McGee, and Trail Team Leaders Erik Forestell (Pittsfield State Forest) and Odin Adolphson (Balance Rock) met with rangers from those two parks to develop several projects: the construction of a new informational kiosk, sponsored by the chapter, to hold information near the trailheads in Pittsfield State Forest; boardwalk repair and trail maintenance at Balance Rock, which morphed into a fantastic discussion of possibilities for future improvements, and discussion about how the teams can work with DCR to continue to establish positive collaboration between the chapter and park.

New Trail Team Leader, Andreas Schmid (Lenox Mountain) and Alison McGee, met with the town of Lenox and members of the Lenox Watershed to discuss signage, including future informational kiosk and trail etiquette signage that addresses rider issues and protects watershed land.

Trail Team Leaders Ruth Wheeler (Kennedy Park) and Bill and Lisa Sigsworth (Beartown State Forest), completed and organized a huge amount of trail maintenance in their parks and inspired others to chip in. We’re looking forward to more work in Beartown with DCR’s Adam Morris, who has been very supportive of the chapter’s efforts.

We also began our newest ride series, a Women’s Introductory Ride that kicked off in September and will run through the end of October. This group has been amazing in either starting up on the bike or returning to it (sometimes after injury). Bringing it back to basics, the rides focus on building confidence and community so these women comfortable when continuing their mountain biking journey. We are excited to see how this series and these women continue to grow!!

ALISON MCGEE
This was not a typical summer. The chapter held no organized group rides or work days, hosted no social events, there were no festivals to attend, and most of the riding stayed close to home. That’s not to say that plenty of miles weren’t logged or that trail work wasn’t getting done. People seemed to use their lack of typical summer commitments to get out on the trails more than normal, sometimes with individuals or small groups that they felt safe with. Trail work still happened but tended to be small private, or even solitary, events.

Spring and early summer saw people clearing the trails and opening things up in both Brattleboro and Keene. Some new bridges appeared in West Keene, a few nice reroutes magically appeared in Stonewall Farm, and sections of trail saw major improvements and enhancements in Drummer Hill. Thanks to all that helped this season!

We had to cancel our Trail School for 2020 but hope to be able to host the event next year. The level of interest was amazing. Stay tuned this winter for more details! We also could not hold our popular spring kick-off picnic over in Vernon VT.

Despite the challenging times this spring and summer, the chapter, and Keene, pulled off something amazing. The Keene Bike Park! The park, located in Wheelock Park in Keene, was built and donated to the City and is free and open to the public. The park is amazing. It is not your typical, small kids pump track that people quickly lose interest in. It is huge, with zones and features for all skill levels – from kids on Strider bikes, up to large dirt jumps that keep the most experienced riders happy. The park was professionally built by the Powder Horn Trail Company from right here in NH. 100% of the park was financed through fundraising, no city tax dollars were spent. Donations from the riding community near and far, local business, several nice grants, and many generous in-kind donations all made this amazing park a reality. Not to mention the countless volunteer hours donated by the local riders. Since the park's opening it has become a major attraction. There isn’t a time that the park isn’t packed with riders. It has become a family gathering spot and is bringing riders together from a wide cross section of the cycling world – mountain bikers, dirt jumpers, BMX riders, kids on Strider bikes and even a few gravel/CX riders are all meeting at the park to ride together and share their love for the sport. It is amazing. Check out the photo essay in this issue to see what I’m talking about, follow us on Instagram or Facebook (@keenebikepark), or visit our website at www.keenebikepark.org. And be sure to come visit!

As we roll into fall, remember that we are sharing the woods with hunters now. Wear some bright colors, consider a bell, and as always be nice to everyone you meet in the woods. Obey any trail closures that you might see – we close the northern end of Far Side in Drummer Hill at the request of the land owner, as well as a trail in West Keene. As the leaves start falling, and people start talking about leaf blowing, remember that less is more, and some higher traffic trails don’t need it at all. If you do leaf blow, resist the urge to clear an 8’ wide swath through the woods, or to blow off the top 3” of soil. This is a great opportunity to NOT blow some of the braids that have formed, allowing the trails to revert to single track. Additionally, Stonewall Farm has requested that the trails do not get leaf blown on their property.

Hopefully things will settle down and we’ll be able to get back to group rides, social events, in person chapter meetings, and trail work. In the meantime – stay safe and have fun. We’ll see you on the trails!
Two major events that our chapter had planned for this year were cancelled due to COVID-19. Out of concern for the health of our volunteers, members and their loved ones, we elected not to hold the second Full Send release ride and party and the Bear Brook Boogie. Hopefully, 2021 will return us to some semblance of normalcy and we will host both events next year. Though events and group rides have waned in 2020, our trail building and maintenance efforts have not.

The crew in Windham continues to do amazing work at the Clyde Pond area. I don’t even want to try to name or count the new trails because by the time you read this, the list would almost certainly be obsolete. Ted and Karen Korza have placed their own personal stamp on a couple of new trails. There are at least ten miles of singletrack trails, ranging from rolling, flowy stuff to technical, rocky trails. There are features throughout the venue. If you haven’t visited, it’s definitely worth the trip.

Though we had planned to formally honor Pete at our season kick-off party that COVID-19 derailed, we nonetheless declared July 31, 2020 Peter Burant Appreciation Day. We chose that day to recognize Pete for all of the contributions he has made to the trails and all aspects of riding in Southern NH. Pete has been at almost every trail day that many of us can remember. In addition to his trail work, Mr. Burant also earned the 2019 Spirit of NH volunteer award for his work with the QC Bike Collective in Manchester getting and keeping more people on bikes. Pete has become the chapter’s premier builder and has much to do with Bear Hill, Rabbit and Raptor in Bear Brook. More recently, Pete has done much design and building at Clyde Pond. His efforts there were recognized by the leaders of the Clyde Farm project earlier this summer with a small COVID-19 compliant BBQ and some well-deserved tokens of appreciation.

Most of us would probably guess that Pete won’t love this recognition and us raving about what a great builder and person he is, but he is way too deserving not to get credit for all his hard work. Those of us who have worked side by side with Pete on the trails know that he just works harder than anyone else. Judging by how much people ride his trails, his builds are also exceptional. Thank you Pete for all you do for the MTB community. We are privileged to have you in our chapter.

The crew at Fort Rock continues their excellent stewardship of the trails in Henderson-Swasey and Oakland Town Forests in Exeter and Newfields. Trail work and network expansion continues with most of the recent efforts being concentrated on private land in Newfields. Great rider turnout for two recent weekend trail work days have focused on making tweaks and modifications to the “Olive Branch” trail which was introduced earlier this spring. The newest trail named “Wheel Power Ed”, introduced in September, climbs the natural terrain in the area and offers technical rock features.

To aid in navigation, Trailforks has been updated to include all new trails and re-routes at Fort Rock, and new trail signage has been installed in the area north of Route 101. As new trails are introduced, the plan is to have correct trail mapping and signage in place. See you on the trails!
There has been a lot going on in the Mount Washington Valley over the summer. Even though the chapter is reorganizing, volunteers found time for numerous, subtle trail improvements as well as some new trails.

At Marshall Conservation Area, a new machine built trail descends gently from Lucille's and connects to the Quarry Link where you can pick up the Quarry Trail and meet up with Lager’s Lane. A short reroute at the bottom of the High School Trail has moved the trail off the logged area and some wet spots were addressed. As you ride our trails both on the East Side and West Side, you will notice some nice tweaks on Lager’s Lane, EKG, the Spring, Old Side Hill, Cheater and Outer Limits. If you've never ridden them, you won't notice it, but those who know the trails are pleased about what a difference the removal of a small tree, a slight tweak in the line of a curve, a well-placed rock, or some armoring makes.

A new area, Pine Hill, has been stewarded by the Upper Saco Valley Trust and may be the newest site for some trails. Currently there is only a short mowed trail called Commuter, but there are plans for more trails. COVID has affected everyone and the number of organized rides and trail work were challenging to schedule. The Mount Washington Valley is a popular place for all kinds of recreation and the trails have seen a lot of use this summer by second home owners staying up here full time and others who never had the time to try mountain biking. Parking lots were overflowing with walkers, hikers and bikers all looking to be outdoors.

The dry conditions have made stream crossings easier but some trails have shown increased wear due to lack of rain and the increased traffic, although drought does help cut back on the need for clipping. Fall looks to provide great riding and the chapter is looking forward to re-energizing over the winter months.

The Rhode Island Chapter has always been about the fun rides and with Covid-19 chapter functions have dwindled considerably and no fun rides. Zoom meetings just aren’t as much fun. Just look at Bill's photo from last year's Woody Hill fun ride, the very face of a man having fun. Now Bill's going to have to go to the RI Food Bank for his watermelon see below.

On the flip side there has been a huge increase in the number of people on the trails. Yes, we have had complaints about trail brading, go arounds and over use. The RI Mountain Biking Facebook page has been a good place for both members and non-members to voice concerns of how the trails are being used and it usually turns out for the best. Peer to Peer education tempted with words of experience are the best way to form good trail stewardship. The number of people working in the woods seems like an all time high. Still we are all looking forward to face to face meetings and THE FUN RIDES.

RI NEMBA stepped up and helped “The Tour De Rhody” to raise money for cancer research. One of our fast guys, Dr. Tom Ollila of the Brown University Oncology Research Group, put together a socially distanced road and gravel ride to raise +$50,000 for cancer research. Aside from volunteers, riders and contributors we funded the water stop. Looks like we have enough left over to do the virtual fun ride as well.

We are working on a virtual fun ride. The purpose is to raise funds for The Rhode Island Food Bank and help fill the food gap caused by the Covid pandemic and help people feed their families. You can check out “RI NEMBA 2020 Tour of Arcadia” on BikeReg at BikeReg.com. Kind of a cool Tee can be purchased from there. Money raised over cost will be sent to the food bank.
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