

International Trails Symposium
April 2019

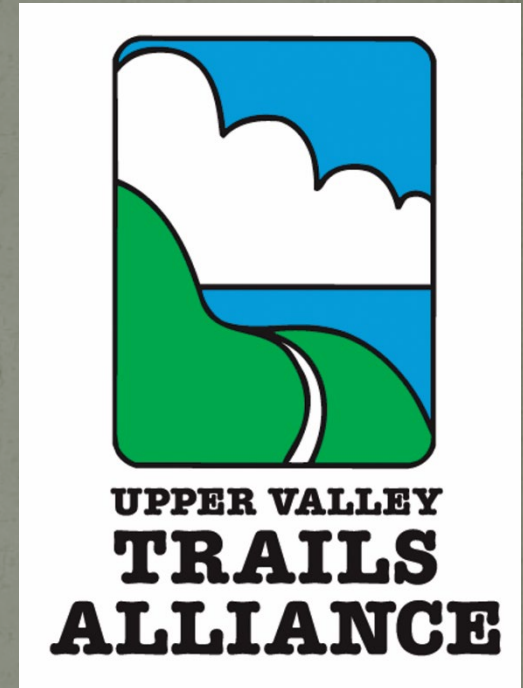
21st Century Way to Attract Trail Users: On-Line Trail Finder

Upper Valley Trails Alliance
Russell Hirschler, Executive Director

and

National Park Service RTCA
Lelia Mellen

The Upper Valley Trails Alliance is the primary coordinator of Trail Finder (trailfinder.info). UVTA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that has been advocating for the maintenance, use, and development of trails since 1999.



The mission of the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) is to assist community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation initiatives. RTCA staff provides guidance to communities so they can conserve waterways, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways.



The logo features the word "trail" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font with a thick black outline. The letter "o" is replaced by a green circular icon containing a white compass rose. Below "trail" is the word "FINDER" in a white, uppercase, sans-serif font with a thick black outline. The background is a topographic map of the New England region, showing towns like Springfield, Chester, and Dover, along with various road shields (7, 100, 91, 30, 63, 202, 8A, 12) and green circular markers with numbers (2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9) indicating trail locations.

trail FINDER

www.TrailFinder.info

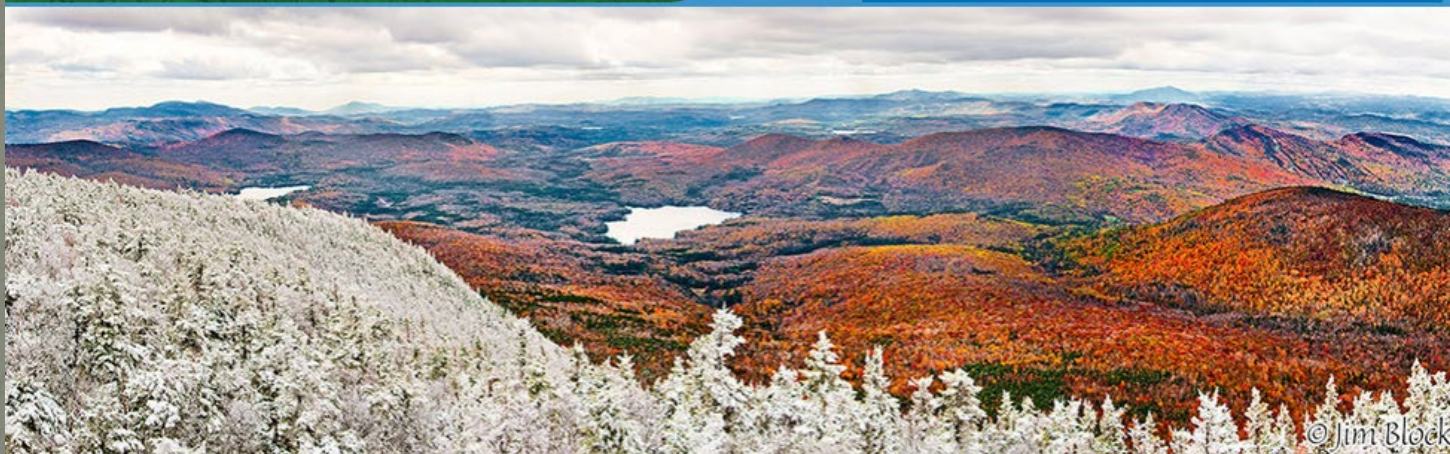
What geography/population/recreation does Trail Finder cover?

- Geography: Trail Finder (TF) focuses on NH and VT.
 - Also in Maine – Maine Trail Finder
- Primary population: visitors to and residents of NH and VT.
- Secondary population: trail managers who are looking for ways to share information about their trails (not only where those trails are, but what to expect before users get there).



Why Trail Finder?

- Common problem: When looking for a place to recreate close to home or when visiting a new area and not knowing what trail resources are available.
- It is challenging to know what content to trust on the Internet when so much is posted by those with partial understanding or without permission.
- Not all landowners and trail managers have the resources or ability to promote and market their trails (and organizations).



Find Trails

Find Trails by Activity



Find Trails Near You

Select Town



Find a Specific Trail

Trail Name, Keyword



Trail Adventures

Select Category

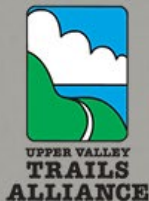


Welcome to Trail Finder

Explore Vermont and New Hampshire



Trail Finder is a tool to help people get out, get active, and explore our beautiful area. This free resource is brought to you by:



University of New Hampshire

Featured Trails

[Aitken State Forest](#)

Mendon (VT)

[Charles E. Rand Memorial Forest](#)

North Hampton (NH), Rye (NH)

[Grand Isle State Park](#)

Grand Isle (VT)

[Lower Slade Brook Trail](#)

Hanover (NH)

[Mount Monadnock Hiking Trails](#)

Dublin (NH), Jaffrey (NH)

[Texas Falls](#)

Hancock (VT)

[West River Trail: Lower Section](#)

Brattleboro (VT), Dummerston (VT)

Can't find your trail? [Let us know!](#)

What catalyzed our action?

- Broad-based interest in promoting trails, especially non-motorized (motorized coming on board slowly).
- Partial, outdated, limited, hard to find, sometimes conflicting information about trails.
- User expectations for fast, easy access to information via the Internet.



How has TF Helped?

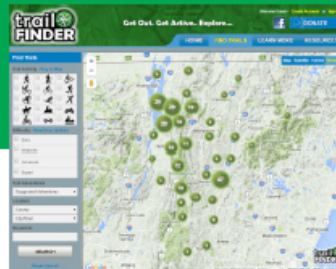
- Articulated the need.
- Built collaborative partnerships.
- Engaged trail managers.
- Implemented web-based solution.
- Promotions/outreach.





GET OUT. GET ACTIVE. EXPLORE...

Trail Finder is a free online trails portal that allows users to search and display information and maps for over 400 trail networks across Vermont and New Hampshire.



www.trailfinder.info



French's Ledges Trail (Plainfield, NH)

GET STARTED TODAY

- Visit the website: www.trailfinder.info
- Create a free Trail Finder account.
- Search and discover trails that you want to explore.
- Go for a hike, bike, trail run, paddle, ski, snowshoe, skate, horseback ride, or off-road vehicle adventure.
- Share your experience with others by adding photos and comments.
- Help Trail Finder get the word out. Share the website with others!



DISCOVER TRAILS

Finding opportunities to get out and get active just got a whole lot easier!

Whether you are looking for a weekend hike, an afternoon stroll, a new trail to run, a great place for a family bicycle ride, or want to try a new adventure like paddling a water trail, use Trail Finder to search a growing collection of four-season trails in the Twin States.



Each detailed Trail Finder posting features:

- An interactive map showing the trail system and important points of interest like natural attractions and parks.
- Trailhead directions.
- A description of the trail.
- Contact information to connect directly with trail managers.
- Photographs and comments.



DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION MANAGE TRAILS?

If you work or volunteer for an organization that maintains its own trails in Vermont or New Hampshire and would like to discuss adding those trails to Trail Finder, we would love to hear from you! Contact the Upper Valley Trails Alliance for more information.

Trail Finder is a collaborative effort between organizations committed to promoting active recreation in Vermont and New Hampshire.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Sean Ogle
Upper Valley Trails Alliance
PO Box 1215
Norwich, VT 05055
sean.ogle@uvtrails.org
802.649.9075
www.uvtrails.org



UPPER VALLEY
TRAILS
ALLIANCE



FORESTS, PARKS & RECREATION
VERMONT
AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES



www.community-gis.org



University of
New Hampshire

Cooperative Extension

Supported by the National Park Service/Find Your Park

Anatomy of a Trail Posting

Features of a Trail Page

- A Trail Overview:** Provides a concise description of the trail's key features along with a thumbnail photograph. These appear on Trail Finder's search page.
- B Quick Facts:** Presents basic "statistics" about the trail, some of which can be queried from the search page.
- C Download Data:** Enables users to download map data in both KML and GPX formats.
- D Current Weather:** Provides a look at the current weather conditions in the vicinity of the trail, provided by Weather Underground.
- E Nearby Geocaches:** Links to geocaching.com where registered users can browse for geocache sites on an interactive map keyed to the same location as the trail.
- F Leave No Trace Principle:** Shows rotating suggestions on how to minimize impacts on the environment and other users.
- G Connect on Facebook:** Facebook widget showing Upper Valley Trails Alliance followers.
- H Interactive Base Map:** Depicts the trail and key points of interest directly on an interactive Google Map. Users can move around the map, toggle map backgrounds, and zoom in or out for more or less detail.
- I Legend:** Provides a key to the map's point symbols and trail lines. Users can toggle points on/off the map and highlight trail

trail FINDER Get Out. Get Active. Explore... Welcome Guest • Create Account or Sign In

HOME FIND TRAILS LEARN MORE RESOURCES

Winooski Nature Trail

This is a very scenic trail that goes along the Winooski River to the falls, with rock cliffs and the railroad trestle crossing the river.

Trail Activity	
Towns	Colchester (VT), Winooski (VT)
Difficulty	Easy
Length	1.3 miles, Network
Surface	Packed Earth/Dirt, Gravel/Crushed Stone/Cinder, Boardwalk/Bog Bridging
Pets	
Fees	

Download

- KML** [Click here to download Trails \(lines\)](#)
[Click here to download Points Of Interest \(points\)](#)
- GPX** [Click here to download Trails \(lines\)](#)
[Click here to download Points Of Interest \(points\)](#)

Current Weather

May 9, 2016 Clear
 48.2°F

Map Satellite Hybrid Terrain
Show Legend

Printer Friendly Version

View Connector Trails

- Winooski River Walk Show | [View Trail Posting](#)

There are Trail Alerts in effect

Roads: General Closure --

What has happened as a result?

- People are learning about opportunities to be active outdoors.
- Trail managers have new voice.
- Trail stakeholder groups have access to a new resource and don't have to reinvent the wheel when wanting to promote trails to their constituencies.
- Comprehensive GIS data being generated and used in other planning arenas.



Trail Finder Promotion



Find local trails
across New
Hampshire &
Vermont



Explore new
places



Connect with
nature



Promote
your trails &
conservation
work



Testimonial from a Trail Finder user:

“I found your website yesterday (2/17/2019) when searching for information on the Slate History Trail in Bomoseen. What a find! My husband and I had a nice winter hike on a beautiful snowy day, and Learned of some nice history close to our home. Today I searched your site and found several other trails around Poultney (VT) that we did not know about. I’ve lived here for 30+ years and only knew of a few of those trails. Here is a donation to keep the site going.”

-Anne, Trail Finder User



What did it take to do this?

- The right team (think partnerships).
- Partners must be capable of understanding how trails + technology + audience + working with volunteers all intersect.
- A robust RFP process for developing the website.

Sugarloaf and Goose Pond

Quick Facts	
Trail Activity	
Town	Alexandria (NH)
Difficulty	Easy, Moderate, Advanced
Length	7.0 miles, Network
Surface	Packed Earth/Dirt, Snow, Ungroomed, Road, Unpaved
Pets	
Fees	
Other Activities	

Download

Trail Finder Partners



Extension



What are our toughest challenges?

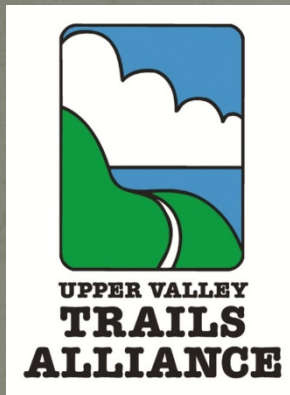
- Rich, robust content development can take time...the start to finish process for posting a trail system to TF is time consuming.
- Trail Finder is one of many things that we do (and that our trail managers do).
- Fundraising– From site development and maintenance funding to funds to support future trail postings to communicating with Trail Managers.





**Get Out.
Get Active.
Explore...**

trail FINDER



NPS RTCA

RIVERS, TRAILS & CONSERVATION
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

www.nps.gov/rtca

For more information, please contact:

Russell Hirschler
(802) 649-9075
russell.hirschler@uvtrails.org

Lelia Mellen
(802) 457-3368 x214
Lelia_Mellen@nps.gov