

\$6.3 Million in VOREC Grants Boost 51 Outdoor Recreation Projects Across Vermont

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Montpelier, VT – Agency of Natural Resources Secretary Julie Moore and the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) today announced 51 new recipients of the VOREC Community Grant Program. These projects mark an investment of over \$6 million into Vermont’s outdoor recreation economy.

"These grants are an investment in Vermont," said Secretary Moore. "They will help communities revitalize their outdoor recreation assets, create jobs, improve access to nature for Vermonters and visitors alike, and build stronger, more resilient communities for years to come."

Projects awarded in this year’s announcement fall into one of four tracks – Implementation, Project Development, Outdoor Equity, and Flood Recovery. Awarded projects will enhance recreation economies in rural, mid-size, and urban communities, lay the groundwork for future

community-based projects, expand access to outdoor recreation for all people, and help communities and trail organizations recover from the flooding of summer 2023.

“We are pleased to support so many amazing projects across Vermont,” said Becca Washburn, Chair of the VOREC Steering Committee and Director of Lands Administration and Recreation for the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation. “The interest in the program, as well as the strength of the applications demonstrates the opportunity communities from Grand Isle to Brattleboro see in investing in the connection between outdoor recreation and economic benefits.”

Awarded projects will support communities in 13 of Vermont’s counties, along with eight statewide projects. Notable projects include:

- Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) for opening almost the entire VAST system after suffering damage during the 2023 flooding.
- A coalition of partners led by the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council will be building an accessibility hub for trail users and managers.
- Cochran’s Ski Area in Richmond for engineering and design for a new surface lift.
- Franklin County Trails Alliance to plan connections from the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail to the St. Albans region.

For the first time, the grant program also encouraged projects focused on outdoor equity to apply to a dedicated funding track. Grant recipient, Arwen Turner, Executive Director of Come Alive Outside, said:

“Come Alive Outside is thrilled to receive funding through the VOREC Community Grant Program’s Outdoor Equity track. This funding supports the continued work of Come Alive Outside’s Outdoors For All Initiative, a collective of organizations, businesses, and advisors with lived experience representing underserved and underrepresented populations in outdoor recreation. This funding will boost the collective’s ability to develop both simple and highly innovative solutions that make accessing the health, wellness, and joy benefits of outdoor activities in Rutland more equitable.”

Governor Scott established the VOREC Steering Committee by executive order in June 2017 to bring together a broad set of outdoor recreation stakeholders to promote stewardship of state recreation assets and market Vermont’s outdoor recreation values and attributes to

effectively foster responsible and sustainable economic growth. The VOREC Community Grant Program became one of the first and highest priorities of the committee. This grant round is the program's fourth and most significant investment in communities across the state.

Learn more about the [VOREC Community Grant Program](#) and watch for future funding opportunities.

List of 2023 VOREC Community Grant Recipients

The 13 municipalities that received a grant are highlighted

ADDISON COUNTY

Blueberry Hill Outdoor Center

\$65,000.00 *Develop a comprehensive strategic plan for the Outdoor Center to ensure its viability as a community recreation hub.*

Town of Cornwall

\$248,231.00 *Develop a public recreation area on a parcel abutting the Cornwall Elementary School.*

Lincoln Sports, Inc.

\$221,500.00 *Build a multi-use trail system including an ADA-compliant trail and a new parking lot that integrates with Lincoln Sports' publicly available sports facilities.*

Middlebury Area Land Trust

\$63,233.34 *Replace and improve the resilience of trails and infrastructure within Wright Park that were damaged in the summer 2023 floods.*

BENNINGTON COUNTY

Manchester Riverwalk Association

\$400,000.00 *Construct an ADA-compliant pedestrian and bike bridge over the Battenkill River.*

CALEDONIA COUNTY

Friends of Dog Mountain

\$192,000.00 *Revitalize and sustain the renowned 3-mile trail system on Dog Mountain's 150-acre property.*

Kingdom Trail Association

\$74,927.00 *Work with Powered Magazine and the Kingdom East School District to expand access to mountain biking for adults and youth through free-of-charge mountain bike clinics, summer camps, and afterschool programs.*

CHITTENDEN COUNTY

Town of Essex

\$80,000.00 *In partnership with Fellowship of the Wheel, implement a scoping study for connecting the Saxon Hill area to the Essex Town Center.*

Catamount Outdoor Family Center

\$126,500.00 *Create architectural, engineering and landscaping plans for a new main building at the Catamount Outdoor Family Center.*

Cochran's Ski Area

\$32,900.00 *Complete the design, engineering plans and permitting for a new surface lift.*

Munt Family Room

\$29,286.00 *Expand and improve outdoor recreation programming at the Munt Family Room for families and children with diverse experiences and backgrounds.*

Petra Cliffs Climbing Center and Mountaineering School

\$14,000.00 *Acquire new mobility and adaptive climbing gear for use in Petra Cliffs programming.*

Shelburne Farms

\$204,600.00 *Improve accessibility to Shelburne Farms facilities.*

Town of Charlotte

\$14,290.00 *Replace the septic system at the Town Beach that failed due to the flooding in summer 2023.*

Town of Milton

\$184,650.00 *Add new accessible recreation facilities and multi-lingual universally-designed trail signage to town recreation properties, and develop a marketing and programming plan focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion in Milton's outdoor recreational spaces.*

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Franklin County Trails Alliance

\$42,500.00 *Facilitate a visioning and planning process to connect St. Albans-area recreation facilities to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail.*

The DREAM Project

\$159,000.00 *Expand capacity and build infrastructure to bolster programming at Camp DREAM.*

GRAND ISLE COUNTY

Healthy Islands and Community Support

\$57,926.19 *Upgrade the skating rink and oval in North Hero village so that skating can be available through more of the winter season.*

LAMOILLE COUNTY

Friends of Stowe Green Mountain Adaptive Sports

\$61,310.00 *Purchase adaptive equipment that allows people with complex disabilities to experience snow sports.*

Northern Forest Canoe Trail

\$30,266.00 *Replace and improve the resiliency of two portage trails along the Lamoille River that were damaged in the summer 2023 floods.*

Town of Johnson

\$27,700.00 *Conduct a scoping study to assess potential connections from the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail to the Johnson Town Center.*

Town of Morristown

\$23,095.39 *Purchase a gear trailer and new gear to replace the outdoor gear available at Oxbow Park that was lost and damaged in the summer 2023 floods.*

ORANGE COUNTY

Orange County Restorative Justice

\$26,682.00 *Initiate the Re-Entry Healthy Lifestyles Outdoor Pilot Program, which will offer safe, supportive, substance free, pro-social outdoor programming and recreation for previously incarcerated participants.*

Sage Mountain Botanical Sanctuary

\$48,335.00 *Host a weekend gathering for members of Vermont's BIPOC community to learn and share about native plants, wildlife, tracking, hiking, and recreating outdoors.*

Town of Bradford

\$106,000.00 *Conduct a master plan for Elizabeth's Park in downtown Bradford.*

ORLEANS COUNTY

Newport City Downtown Development

\$200,000.00 *Establish the Newport Outdoor Recreation Collaborative and collectively create and share opportunities for recreation based from downtown Newport.*

NorthWoods Stewardship Center

\$195,700.00 *Improve access to Northwoods Stewardship Center facilities, build an All-Persons trail and improve the inclusiveness of NWSC's outdoor education programming.*

Town of Glover

\$182,000.00 *Expand infrastructure at Glover Park to include a sensory trail and all-access outdoor play facilities.*

RUTLAND COUNTY

Come Alive Outside

\$298,950.00 *Provide capacity and programming support to Come Alive Outside's outdoor equity efforts in Rutland County.*

Merck Forest and Farmland Center

\$365,680.00 *Install a universal access trail a boardwalk to connect Mettawee Community School to Merck Forest and Farmland Center's trail network and property.*

Smokey House Center

\$92,298.50 *Develop a community-informed plan to revitalize Smokey House's degraded trail system and design a trail-based community science program.*

Town of Killington

\$84,000.00 *Build a critical connection between the Sherburne Parking Lot and Pesky Cairn trails.*

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Friends of the Winooski River, Inc.

\$101,860.00 *Conduct a master and design plan for river access in Barre City so that all residents can access and enjoy the Winooski River.*

North Branch Nature Center

\$5,261.88 *Repair and make more resilient the recreation infrastructure at North Branch Nature Center that was damaged in the floods of Summer 2023.*

Norwich University

\$25,000.00 *Repair and make more resilient a mountain bike trail at Shaw Outdoor Center that was damaged in the floods of Summer 2023.*

Town of Cabot

\$14,548.00 *Restore and improve Cabot's Recreation Field that was damaged in the floods of Summer 2023.*

Town of Cabot Trails Committee

\$75,000.00 *Replace and make more resilient two bridges in the Cabot Trails network that were damaged in the floods of Summer 2023.*

Town of Waterbury

\$49,800.00 *Repair and make more resilient a soccer field and playground that were damaged in the floods of Summer 2023.*

Wrightsville Beach Recreation District

\$123,762.25 *Purchase and outfit a mobile facility for outdoor gear rentals to replace the facilities damaged during the floods of Summer 2023.*

WINDHAM COUNTY

Town of Wilmington

\$227,700.00 *Upgrade and improve the accessibility of the Hoot, Toot, and Whistle Rail trail.*

Windham Foundation

\$58,475.00 *Conduct an outdoor recreation planning process for the Village of Grafton including connections to trails, the village center and improving accessibility.*

WINDSOR COUNTY

Green Mountain Horse Association

\$100,000.00 *Develop a flood mitigation and management plan for the Green Mountain Horse Association's main campus in South Woodstock.*

Hartland Winter Trails

\$44,166.00 *Repair and make more resilient the Hartland Winter Trail system that was damaged in the floods of Summer 2023.*

STATEWIDE OR MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

Catamount Trail Association

\$21,504.00 *Purchase new ski equipment to sustain and expand Catamount Trail Association's youth learn to ski programs.*

CRO Planning & Design

\$196,585.00 *Conduct a recreator survey and economic impact analysis for adaptive recreation in Vermont.*

Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals

\$27,500.00 *Design and deliver an Inclusive Spaces Audit Workshop for outdoor recreation providers who manage trails, campgrounds, marinas, visitor centers, etc.*

Unlikely Riders

\$226,885.00 *Secure a temporary gear closet for BIPOC skiers and riders, conduct a strategic planning process for a permanent base lodge facility and expand the capacity of Unlikely Riders.*

Vermont ATV Sportsman's Association

\$317,400.00 *Repair and make more resilient seven sections of trail within the VASA network that were damaged in the floods of Summer 2023.*

Vermont Association of Snow Travelers

\$90,887.00 *Repair and make more resilient six sections of trail within the VAST network that were damaged in the floods of Summer 2023.*

Vermont Trails and Greenways Council

\$644,437.00 *In partnership with Vermont Adaptive, Northern Forest Canoe Trail, Vermont Mountain Bike Association, Upper Valley Trails Alliance, and Community Geo, develop a statewide trail accessibility hub and complete detailed trail assessments in order to promote and share high-quality information about trail access across the state.*

Vermont Mountain Bike Association

\$59,994.95 *Repair and make more resilient nine sections of trail within the VMBA network that were damaged in the floods of Summer 2023.*

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