





Millstone TRAILS

A gem hidden
in plain sight



Looking for a break from the summer heat but still want to get some exercise? Grab your mountain bike and head to Millstone Trails in Barre. There, you can ride through 1,500 acres of diverse terrain, some of it naturally air-conditioned thanks to quarry grout piles that hold ice and snow throughout most of the summer, lowering the air temperature by 10 to 20 degrees. Trail maps even indicate the coolest areas for riding.

FANS FROM BARRE AND BEYOND

It started as just a series of trails overseen by local riders, but Millstone Trails Association (MTA) grew, and the organization obtained nonprofit status in 2007. Board President Stephen J. Maas says the initial trail-building was on private land, but subsequently, through purchase and donation, most of that land was conserved by the Vermont Land Trust with the creation of the Barre Town Forest. Close to 70 percent of the Millstone trails are in the forest, and the majority of the private land is owned by the Rock of Ages Quarry. “It progressed from private land to more of a town-based resource,” Stephen says.

MTA is a chapter of the Vermont Mountain Bike Association. Mountain bikers can purchase annual memberships or \$10 day-use passes, available online and at local stores. This year, the nonprofit is hoping to add a locked box to the premises for on-site cash payments. Others who use the trails for walking, hiking, or snow sports don’t have to pay a trail fee.



Above: Bridges are a way of life at Millstone. Because of their unique setting, the Millstone Trails traverse some complex geological features, making bridges more than just a way to get over wet spots.

Below: MTA's Trail Crew Chief Kevin Jacques rolls by the Capitol Quarry.

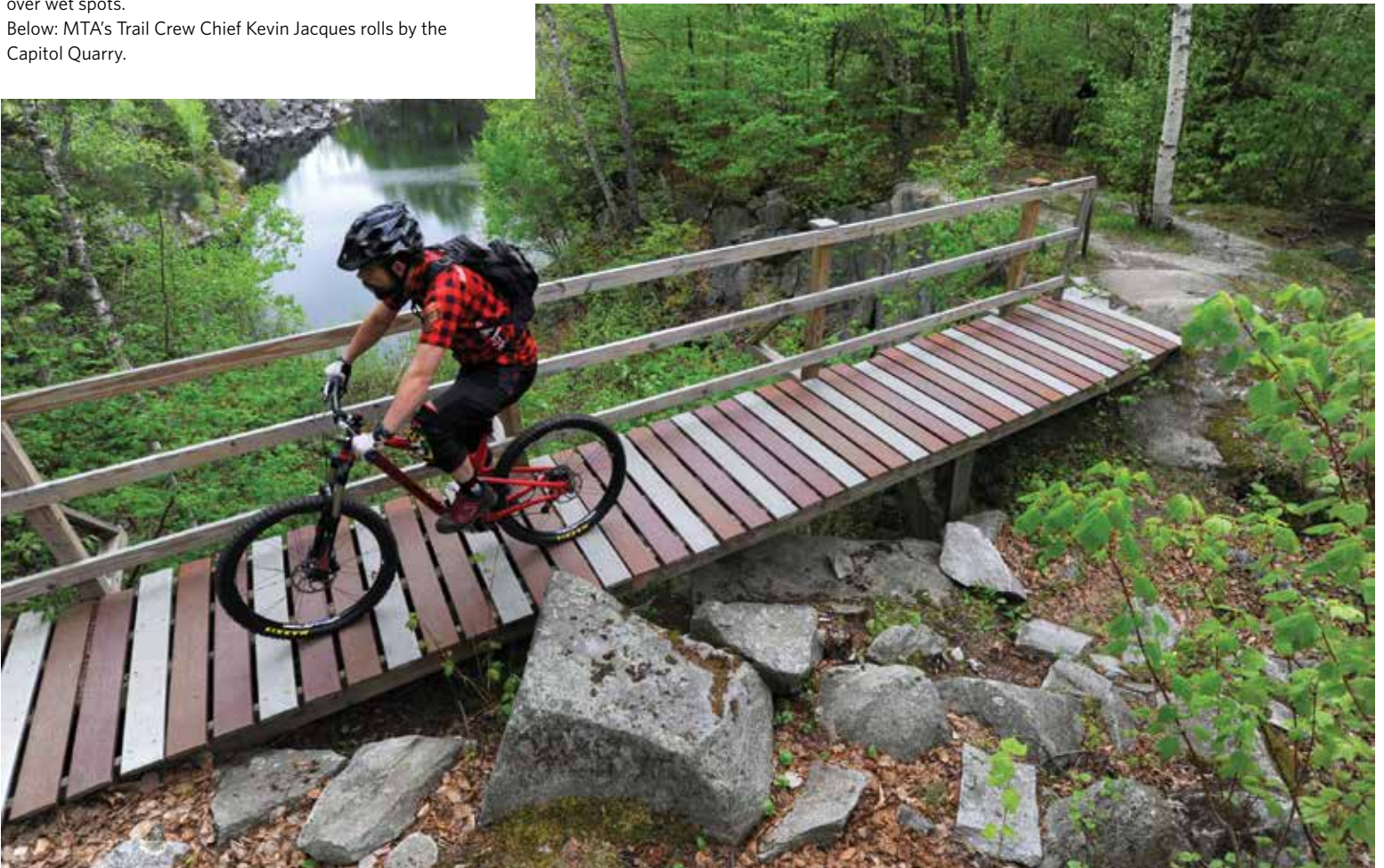




PHOTO BY BETH MUELLER

Ideally, Millstone’s board of directors would like to avoid charging fees entirely, but money is needed to maintain the trails. “We’re a multipurpose property,” Stephen says, “but mountain biking is our bread and butter.” The demographic profile of the trail users is wider than one might expect. At least two-thirds are from beyond Barre, from across New England and Canada. There are even a few visitors from Western states.

THE MAD RIVER GLEN OF MOUNTAIN BIKING

Jay Hollingsworth of Barre heads to Millstone on a weekly basis for cycling and running, including headlamp-lit runs during winter evenings after work. “Millstone is like no other trail network in Vermont,” he says. “You feel like you are running through the industrial granite history that put Barre on the world map.”

Jay enjoys the fact that several artifacts remain on the land, providing a connection to Barre’s past. “The trails wind through this terrain scattered with abandoned quarries and huge overburden piles slowly being reclaimed by nature,” he says.

Stephen says Millstone is often referred to as the Mad River Glen of mountain biking since it is small and has a lot of technically difficult terrain. “There is a lot of single track,” he says, “and a lot of features like bridges and rails, as well as natural granite features like weird rock piles and ledges.” Last year, a new beginner trail was added, but the area is better known for its expert terrain.

Millstone has three distinct sections: The Canyonlands, Barre Town Forest, and Gnome Man’s Land. The Canyonlands is named for



Photo: Derrick Barrett

CUSHMAN DESIGN GROUP
 Creative · Intuitive · Functional · Efficient
 Architectural Design Solutions.
 253-2169 | Stowe, VT | cushman.design.com



AARON FLINT BUILDERS
 11 North Main Street
 Waterbury, VT 05676
 802-371-9433
aaronflintbuilders.com

Right, above and below: After decades of regrowth, the forests around Barre's ancestral quarrying sites have reclaimed dominion. What were once enormous piles of discarded waste rock have become living mountains, and what were once industrial granite-extraction sites are now serene freshwater pools.

active quarries filled with clear turquoise water to its north. It is one of the least-used sections of the area and has been described by *Bike Magazine* as having “a backcountry feel.” The 400-plus acres in the Barre Town Forest have the greatest diversity and include trails suitable for novice riders. *Bike Magazine* calls it “beautifully old school.” It also has the terrain most suitable for winter use. Jay enjoys bringing his 11- and 13-year-old kids to the forest trails for mountain biking as they grow more comfortable with the sport.

By contrast, Gnome Man's Land has the most difficult trails and includes sculptures carved by local artists. Jay describes the trails as including “lots of steep, fast sections with drops and narrow, high, no-fall bridges and narrow rock spines.” One member of the Millstone trail crew has been known to hide garden gnomes along the routes. The Angry Gnome trail, which includes wooden bridges that span rocky gaps, is a favorite for experienced riders, and Harrington Heights, Harrington Ridge, and Vortex provide challenges with roots, rocks, and a few stretches of exposed granite. The trails in this section are primarily used for mountain biking.

Millstone hosts summer group rides with a “no-drop” policy of making sure no rider gets left behind. Occasional mountain bike races also take place. A weekly walking group visits the trails every Tuesday morning and has put together a walking guide for the area. In addition to trail use, there is a free 18-hole disc golf course in the middle of the town forest that features a regular schedule of tournaments.

A VOLUNTEER EFFORT

Millstone has a core of volunteers who make up the trail crew, while others come more intermittently or for special events. Almost all the work is done by volunteers. Kevin Jacques of Williamstown is the head of the Millstone trail crew. When he first learned that the area was looking for volunteers, he helped out with existing trails, but since that time, he and his brother and several friends have created new trails in the Gnome Man's Land area.

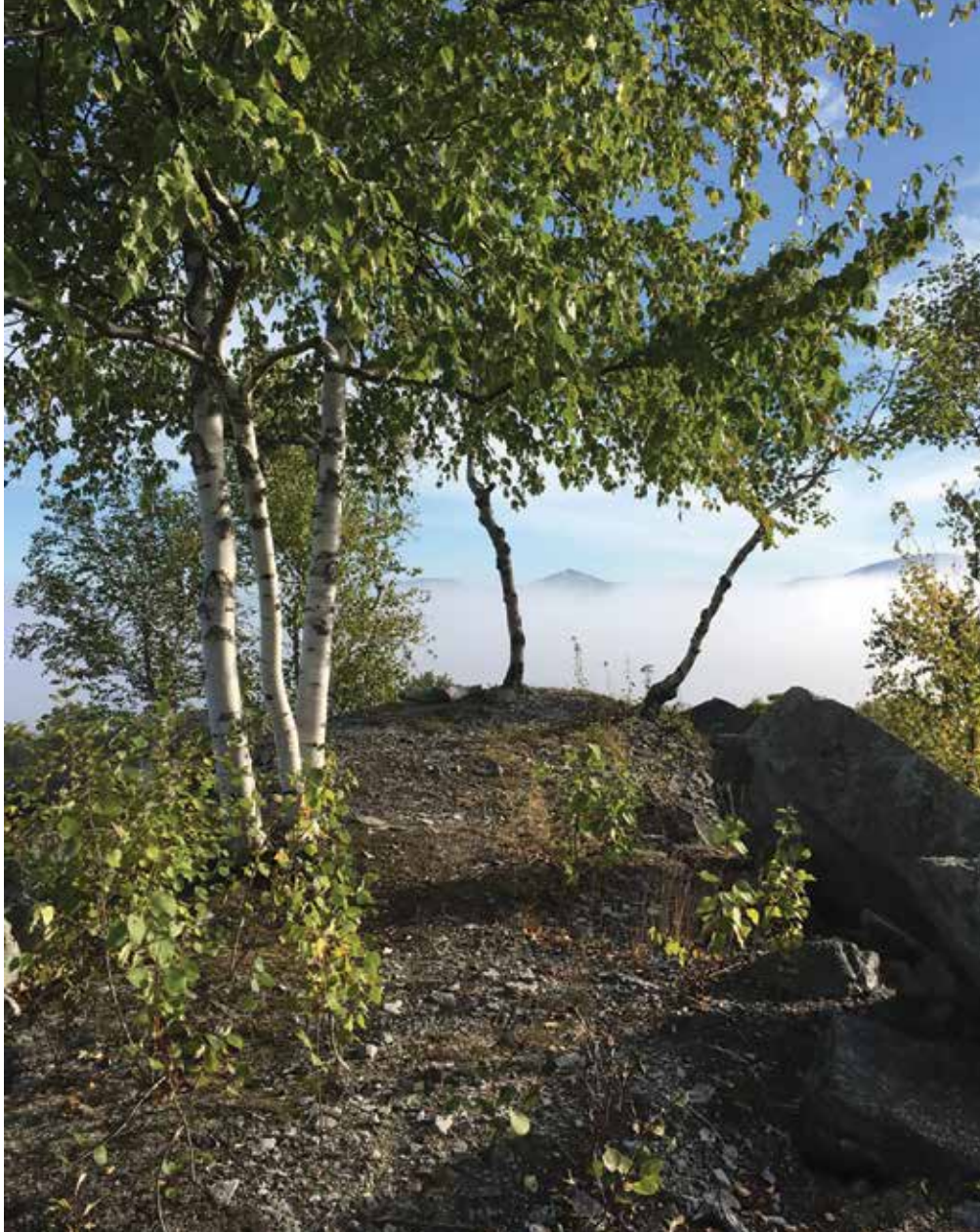


PHOTO BY BETH MUELLER



PHOTO BY BETH MUELLER



“I’m a carpenter,” Kevin says, “and if I couldn’t dig something out, I’d build a bridge. We built a lot more bridges than we thought we would.” The group created trails named Roller Coaster, Screaming Daemon, and Angry Gnome.

Kevin has a full-time job and a family, but it was important to him to give back to his community. Although at the onset he had no trail-building experience, he felt that he had spent enough time in the woods as a biker, hunter, and hiker to have the skills to take on the work.

“You spend some time walking through the woods,” he says, “and you find some cool resources and iconic things to build your trails on like a big rock or waterfall. You weave your trail around that and start putting the puzzle pieces together to figure out how to connect point A and point B. Once you’ve got the outline, the sky’s the limit.”

Kevin is thankful that he’s been able to get volunteers to help him build the trails, as well as others who provided assistance after last fall’s windstorm. There are people who wonder why he doesn’t ask to get paid for his work, but he gets his reward in other ways.

“There are things in life that are more important than money,” he says. “Sometimes I’ll be out in the woods working on a trail, and I hear someone hooting and hollering and having fun, and that’s way more important than any dollar amount for me. That’s what keeps me coming back.”

For more information about the Millstone Trails, visit www.millstonetrails.org 🌞



A Collaboration of Independent Health Care Providers

JOSHUA SINGER
Licensed Acupuncturist
ACUPUNCTURE AND
CHINESE MEDICINE

STEPHANIE WAWRZYNIAK
Naturopathic Physician
SAGE NATUROPATHIC
HEALTH

ERIC SILVERS
Certified Massage Therapist
HELLERWORK PRACTITIONERS
OF VERMONT
INTEGRATIVE BODYWORK

JACOB RUSCZEK
Psychologist - Doctorate
INDIVIDUAL
PSYCHOTHERAPY

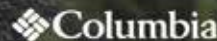
At River Street Wellness, we feel that good health care is a cooperative experience with the individual at the center of a caring team of providers.

301 River St. Montpelier, VT
802.225.6634
riverstreetwellnessvt.com



NEW DISCOUNTED USED

**Clothing and Equipment
to Help You Reach
New Heights!**



37 Church Street Burlington 888-547-4327

