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**From:** Sharon Plumb <sharon+vermonttgc.org@ccsend.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 15, 2023 7:19 AM  
**Subject:** Trails Flood Response & Recovery





**YOUR VOICE FOR RECREATION, TRAILS AND CONSERVATION  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS**

## Become A Member

**Dear Friends,**

This week’s catastrophic flooding has devastated communities throughout the state. **We hope that you and your loved ones are safe.** The outpouring of people eager to help has been incredible. People by the thousands are showing up to muck out basements, rip out sheetrock, haul away trash, and offer food and respite. Caring for people is the most important work and will need to continue for many long months, until walls are painted and people are back in their homes and businesses.

We encourage trails’ organizations to prioritize support for their communities. We also know how critical outdoor recreation and trails are to Vermonters well-being and economy. VTGC is here to share resources to support your organization’s efforts in trail-related recovery. We will continue to post information on our website and through our e-newsletter. *This is a tough time and we will make it through together.*

*The VTGC Board*



## FLOOD RELATED RESOURCES

Organizations that manage trails are encouraged to post updates on their websites and social media. FPR has put out [this press release](#) and these [helpful slides](#) that organizations can use in social media and other outreach. Statewide organizations will update their

websites and/or social media with flood recovery information that may be useful to your work.

- [VTGC Website](#)
- [Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance \(VOBA\)](#)
- [Vermont Recreation & Parks Association \(VRPA\)](#)
- [Vermont Rail Trail System](#)
- [Vermont Business for Social Responsibility \(VBSR\) Flood Recovery Guide for Businesses](#)
- [Common Good's Nonprofit Flood Response & Recovery Information page](#)
- [Agency of Commerce and Community Development \(ACCD\)](#)

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## TRAIL USERS: USE CAUTION & KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- There are opportunities to **get outside in less-impacted areas**, but use caution and act responsibly when out on trails.
- **Check websites for updated trail information.** Trail managers are working to assess trails and recreation infrastructure and post notices, but cannot get to every trail.
- **Avoid flood waters!** Please stay away from waterways. It is not safe to wade, swim, fish, or boat until flows return to normal, even in areas that are not posted with notices to avoid contact. The edges of waterways are also unsafe and easily damaged, especially if they were recently flooded.
- **Access is the first step.** Roads remain closed in many parts of the state. Before you head out, [check 511](#) for state highway closures. You might encounter local road closures that are not posted online. If you come to a closure, turn around and choose a different route or alternate destination. Never travel over flooded roadways.
- **Know before you go.** Check online resources listed below to see if there are alerts posted for the trail you plan to visit.
- **Use caution.** With more rain in the forecast and already saturated soils, trail conditions are actively changing. Use caution when recreating, even if the trail was not posted as closed. Turn around if you encounter a washed out trail or bridge, significant blowdowns, landslides or other hazards.
- **Stay safe.** Recreate within your abilities and make good decisions when you are outside. Plan your trip in a responsible way that minimizes risk and lowers the chance you might need rescue from already strapped emergency responders.
- **Volunteer.** Many trail organizations and affected towns and businesses will be organizing volunteer days in the coming weeks. Join the mailing list or become a member of your local trails organization to learn more. Please don't attempt any repairs, use any equipment like chainsaws or excavators, or enter waterways.
- **Visit open downtowns.** Outdoor businesses and municipalities are recovering from flooding across Vermont. Check the website of your favorite outdoor business, coffee shop, or other business to find out how you can support them.

## TRAIL UPDATES

- [Trail Finder](#): hiking and multi-use trails
- [VMBA's Trail Conditions](#): most mountain bike trails
- [GMC Trail Conditions](#): Long Trail system alerts

- [Vermont State Parks](#): State Park alerts listed on specific park page

## RAIL TRAIL UPDATES

- **All four AOT-managed rail trails are closed due to flood damage** These include the 93-Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, Delaware & Hudson Rail Trail, and Beebe Spur Rail Trail. AOT anticipates beginning damage assessment work next week. For those trails and/or trail segments that sustained little to no damage and are safe to use, AOT will open those back up ASAP. For those trail segments that sustained catastrophic damage and remain impassable, While AOT appreciates volunteer efforts to begin assessment and repair, damage assessment work must be completed by AOT staff in order to ensure FEMA eligibility. AOT will update its [website](#) as they have more information to share. While they understand peoples' eagerness to get the trails back in shape to ride, they ask people to *please understand that VTrans forces and the contractors we partner with will all be focused on restoring critical roadway connections throughout the State for some time, particularly for communities and individuals who are left without a connection to essential resources.*
- The Cross Vermont Trail (Montpelier & Wells River Rail Trail) in Marshfield and Groton is closed. There are numerous washouts and impacts to bridges, which are still being assessed. The western half of Cross Vermont Trail route from Burlington to East Montpelier, and also in Wells River in the far east, appear to be OK based on initial survey. There may be ongoing news of further impacts to the route, especially where the route is associated with roads as they get fully assessed by VTrans and by Towns. [Find updates here.](#) The good news? The new bridge east of 14 let the water pass underneath safely.
- The Colchester Causeway and [Island Rail Trail](#) ARE OPEN, though the [bike ferry](#) is closed due to mechanical issues.

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## ASSESSMENTS & REPAIR

- Many trails are still dangerous. Understandably, volunteers are eager to document and repair damaged trails. Many trails organizations are urging volunteers to wait until they can systemize data gathering and get boots on the ground to do assessment and repair work. Let your volunteers know how you want to proceed. Please be aware, too, that federal funding applications will have very specific, yet to be announced requirements. You may want to hold off on detailed assessments until these requirements are known.
- The Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), alongside State Emergency Management officials, will be working with FEMA and other Federal agencies to secure assistance in repairing flood damage. ACCD has asked the VTGC to gather insight into trail-related damages across the state and develop a collective sense of the impacts and what recovery will look like. In the days ahead and when it is safe to do so, it is important to document damages to our outdoor recreation infrastructure to help ensure Vermont secures the necessary support to recover swiftly and fully. If you can share these reports, including photos/videos as possible, with our co-Chair [Nick Bennette](#), it will help ensure we provide a comprehensive picture to ACCD.
- VAST has put out the word to volunteers to document damage. They would like clubs to report trail damage using [this form](#). They also encourage clubs

to use the Solocator app ([solocator.com](http://solocator.com)) to document the storm damage. This will allow you to take photos of damaged trail sections to save to your phone and then attach to VAST's form. The app automatically assigns a GPS point to each photo for reference; other trails' groups might like to check out this product.

- For those who own or operate outdoor recreation businesses, we similarly advise you to document the damage to your business and inventory via photos and videos as soon as it is safe to do so. Kelly Ault of the Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance ([VOBA](#)) will be playing a similar liaison role with the State on behalf of outdoor recreation businesses - please share the impacts you are facing via [email](#) or voice/text at 802-272-0795.
- Vermont Emergency Management and Vermont 211 have set up an intake form for businesses looking to report damages. This reporting will be used to create a database and allow state and federal agencies to communicate directly with businesses owners as disaster loans and other aid comes online. The damage form can be found here on the ACCD website: <https://vermont211.org/business-form#Business%20Form>

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## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- The [Vermont Main Street Flood Recovery Fund](#) has been established to provide grants to small businesses in the wake of the storm. The Fund will provide grants in the range of \$2,500-\$10,000 to cover costs such as equipment replacement, supplies and help with clean-up.
- The Vermont Community Foundation has opened the [VT Flood Response and Recovery Fund 2023](#) to support Vermonters responding to and recovering from the floods. Please consider donating.
- Encourage your town leaders to include trails in their FEMA Applications. VRPA is working with municipal leaders on how to approach them in this effort.
- More to come over time.

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## We'll help YOU Spread YOUR news

Have trails-related news, events, or job postings? Let us help you get the word out. Send a blurb with details and links to [sharon@vermonttgc.org](mailto:sharon@vermonttgc.org) by the **15th of every month**.

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*Photos top to bottom: Nick Bennette (VMBA) & Quinn Keating, The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail leaving Hardwick toward Walden (Contributed Photo via Facebook).*

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