

For Immediate Release

BATS Surveys Trail Users on Area Trail System

BENNINGTON, VT—May 24, 2021—The Bennington Area Trail System (BATS) has published an online survey to assess use levels on Bennington’s trail system and to solicit input on the trails future development. The short survey, which will be open until June 4th and takes 5 – 15 minutes to complete, seeks responses from all users of the trail system. Questions request basic demographic information on current trail users, inquire as to how and when the trails are used, and offer opportunities to rate and comment on aspects of the trail system and management.

The BATS trail system consists of 10+ miles of hiking and mountain biking trails around the base of Mountain Anthony, on the campus of Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, and at the pump track site at Stark Street Playground. “We hope everyone who has used the trails – whether once a year or multiple times per week – contributes to this survey to help BATS prioritize maintenance of areas most valued by the community and to gather ideas for future development,” stated Brad DeBoer, president of the BATS Board of Directors. BATS is a volunteer-run non-profit group dedicated to maintenance and development of the area’s trail network. The group’s work is funded exclusively through donations, local memberships with the Vermont Mountain Biking Association (VMBA), and occasional trail construction grants.

Continued public access to critical sections of the BATS trails was secured in 2020 when Southwestern Vermont Health Care (SVHC) acquired the 370+ acre former Southern Vermont College campus. As redevelopment scenarios emerge for the next iteration of that central property’s use, understanding how the public reaches and uses the trails is more important than ever. Survey results will inform BATS trail development planning. A summary of trail survey results will be published by BATS later this summer. Please contribute your experience and perspective to the online survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QLWCHR9>

About BATS:

The Bennington Area Trail System (BATS) is located in the beautiful southwestern corner of Vermont. BATS was founded by a group of local bikers, runners, and hikers that advocate for multi-use singletrack trails for the enjoyment of area residents and visitors alike. As a non-profit 501 (c)(3), BATS works with public and private landowners to plan, build, and maintain trails for sustainable, non-motorized use in and around the Bennington, Vermont area. BATS is a proud chapter of the Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA), which helps support the local chapter with grants and other resources that are important to current and future success.

Mission

The Bennington Area Trail System’s mission is to build and steward trail systems that support human-powered outdoor recreation opportunities, while cultivating a culture that values outdoor recreation, community health, and a recreation economy in southwestern Vermont.

Organization Goals

- Establish and promote a culture of cooperation between individuals, businesses, and institutions to support outdoor recreation on local trail systems.
- Support the local economy by building and promoting a resource that attracts people to the area.
- Improve community health by getting people to be active on outdoor trail systems.

Organizational History

BATS is a volunteer-run non-profit organization formed in the summer of 2015 by a dedicated group of mountain bikers, hikers, trail runners, and overall outdoor enthusiasts who recognized the amazing yet largely untapped potential that the southwestern Vermont landscape presents to trail enthusiasts. In the fall of 2015, BATS signed its first Land Access Agreements with former Southern Vermont College (SVC) and a neighboring private landowner, and constructed its first trail, Hops & Vines.

In 2016, BATS established additional Land Access Agreements, worked in conjunction with college students to hold the first annual 'Trail Mix' season kickoff event, built an additional ~4 miles of trail, co-hosted the 10th annual Wicked Creepy Cyclocross Race, and laid the groundwork for more ambitious projects. Since 2016, BATS has expanded the trails at the base of Mount Anthony to total over 10 miles of trails, installed a pump track for youth at Stark Street Playground, and supported development of trails on the campus of Southwest Vermont Medical Center. Please consider supporting BATS by making a direct donation or by becoming a member of VMBA.

Media Contact:

Brad DeBoer, Board President
Bennington Area Trails System (BATS)
bdeboer74@gmail.com