



Though the leaves have mostly fallen, the days are becoming perilously short, and snow is in the forecast, mountain bike season is still hanging on. The early spring warmth and continuing drought have given us one of the longest riding seasons in memory - a side benefit of a difficult situation for farmers, wells, and nature alike.

MAMBA, too, has been very much in flux this year as well. We've had an almost complete turn over of our board and as such have been focused on building and sustaining the organization. Despite all the changes, we've had an extremely active year - from running our weekly rides with Onion River Outdoors to planning multiple projects for this and next year. In the coming months, you're going to hear quite a bit from us about:

- **Adaptive Use Improvements to the North Branch Trail System.** We are making the North Branch trail system fully accessible to adaptive bikes. We recently completed an adaptive assessment thanks to VMBA and Vermont Adaptive and have a plan to address a number of narrow bridges and sharp switchbacks that will make it easier for adaptive bikes to ride at North Branch.
- **New Progressive Skills Course.** With the approval of the Montpelier City Council and support from the Montpelier Recreation Department, we have begun planning a mountain bike skills course at the County Club Road property in Montpelier. The plan calls for progressive jump lines, skills-focused terrain and features, and adaptive friendly terrain catering to kids and adults looking to ride intermediate and advanced features.
- **North Branch Pump Track Upgrade.** We have started the planning process to improve and expand the pump track to include more features and variety of terrain and still provide a welcoming gathering spot for the community.

Since the pandemic years when MAMBA's membership was at its height, we have seen a substantial decline in the number of folks who have been joining MAMBA. While this is partially due to the larger number of great clubs in our neighboring areas, the reality is that we want to be doing more in our community and are working toward that end to generate:

- **More Inclusive Riding Opportunities.** This year, we supported several women's and non-binary rides. In 2026 we are going to offer more beginner, women's, and non-binary clinics and rides.
- **Renewed and Continued Partnerships to Support the Mountain Biking Community.** Many of our achievements this year were the result of strong partnerships. This year we co-sponsored the Montpelier Complete Streets Glow Ride, engaged the Central Vermont Trailblazers youth mountain bike team in trail work projects, supported Montpelier Parks and Recreation's development of the Hubbard Park multi-use connector trail, and worked with East Montpelier Trails to rebuild the Sparrow Farm Trail boardwalk. In 2026, we look to renew and expand our relationships with these and other partners to advance enjoyable and robust Montpelier-area mountain biking opportunities.



- **Community Feedback and Engagement** .This spring more than 160 volunteer hours contributed to the earliest opening day for the North Branch trails. The board and community members attended countless city council meetings to advocate for mountain biking interests. In 2026, we look to generate more community involvement by continuing to ask for your support on trail days, inviting you to our board meetings, engaging you in our advocacy work, and plugging you into other MAMBA projects you may be interested in.

MAMBA has a long history in Montpelier and we feel enormously lucky to have been entrusted with its stewardship and growth. While the unglamorous work of organizational development doesn't quite carry the excitement of new mountain biking lines at Country Club Road, we are building on top of a great foundation and are working to start communicating that mission and vision that we have. The expansion of the board this year increases our capacity to do more and communicate what and how we're doing it.

The last few days of rain and a freeze thaw cycle with snow in the forecast likely spell the end of normal mountain bike season in the not so distant future. The snow dog that we use to groom North Branch for fat biking has just been reassembled with a new stator and flywheel thanks to the efforts of our volunteer grooming crew. We will be up and running to start laying down that sweet corduroy and perfectly shaped berms as soon as the snow really sticks.

We hope to see you out there on the snow, and if not, at our volunteer days in the spring. Please consider joining MAMBA as a member next year and coming to one of our meetings this winter to help us plan and grow for next year!

All the best,

Arthur, Chris, Jess, Margaret, Mark, Rick, Scott, and Simeon (MAMBA board)

PS: You can support MAMBA beyond becoming a member and help fund our efforts at North Branch, Country Club road, and beyond. You can [donate online](#) or send a check to Montpelier Area Mountain Bike Association, P.O. Box 1091, Montpelier, VT 05601. Our EIN is 27-2833581.