

Trail Building scheduled for 2014 in the Western Maine Mountains: In late summer a group of hearty, kind-hearted, knowledgeable folks will be gathering high above Carrabassett Valley in Western Maine eager to lend a hand to a project that will be enjoyed by mountain bikers from near and far for years to come. The Carrabassett Region chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (CRNEMBA) and Maine Huts & Trails (MH&T) will be hosting a trail building event on August 22nd, 23rd and 24th 2014 known as NEMBA TrailFest. The event will use the MH&T Stratton Brook Hut as a base of operations and is expected to draw as many as 75 volunteers from all over New England and beyond.



This is a story that starts with a small group of mountain bikers based in the Carrabassett Valley region who have been able to harness the energy of seasonal and year-round Carrabassett Valley residents and the mountain bike community at large to help realize their vision of connecting various community centers in the valley with a network of trails suitable for bikers of all abilities. This small group formed CRNEMBA in July of 2010 and with their inclusive spirit

has expanded the club into the largest Maine chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA). This group, which includes individual and families from around the state, has mustered 1,000 hours or more of volunteer time per year to maintain and expand the trail network. Their energy and vision has attracted significant support from the Town of Carrabassett Valley, Bikes Belong, Maine Huts & Trails, Sugarloaf, First Wind, and L.L. Bean as well as a variety of other local and not-so-local businesses. The network of professional-grade, sustainable trails now covers more than 10 square miles and would not be possible without the generous permission of local landowners including the Penobscot Indian Nation, the Town of Carrabassett Valley, The State of Maine, Sugarloaf, and the Carrabassett Valley Sanitation District.

Volunteers attending the TrailFest event will be treated to accommodations at the MH&T Stratton Brook Hut Friday and Saturday night with meals and live entertainment included. Some local participants will hike or ride in daily to insure that volunteers from outside the valley can be accommodated within the hut's approximately 50 bed capacity.



The work at hand in August will focus on connecting the town-maintained Narrow Gauge rail trail to Maine Huts & Trails Stratton Brook Hut with work toward completion of the Oak Knoll trail. This will allow bikers easier and more enjoyable access to the Stratton Brook Hut for overnight or day visits where the hospitality of the hut and spectacular panoramic views can be enjoyed. The new trail and adjoining network will allow riders to travel between Stratton Brook Hut, Poplar Stream Hut, Sugarloaf Outdoor Center, Sugarloaf base area, and the town of Carrabassett Valley park which includes a pool, playground, tennis courts as well as soccer and baseball fields.

Construction of the Oak Knoll trail started last year with funding provided CRNEMBA and MH&T for rental of a small specialized excavator used to construct the base of the trail through the rough terrain. Last summer's TrailFest participants completed the difficult but satisfying job of transforming the irregular base into a smoother surface with twists, banked turns and rock paved sections to protect wet areas.



The tools of the trail builder's trade include common tools such as rakes, picks and shovels but also a variety of lesser known tools originally developed for the forest fire fighter like the Pulaski and McLeod. Seventy-five people hard at work on the trail presents an image of what it might have been like to see the Civil Conservation Corps in action. At least until the late afternoon when TrailFest participants head out for a bike ride or sit down in the evening for a delightful meal and a cold beer.

CRNEMBA, the Town of Carrabassett Valley and Maine Huts & Trails together are funding the construction of the remaining 2.5 +/- miles of the trail which is scheduled to be completed this year.

For additional information about this event visit the CRNEMBA website <http://carrabassett.nemba.org/> or contact:

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