



**BIKE BRIGHTLY**

BICYCLE COALITION OF MAINE

## BIKING by the NUMBERS

The Coalition's Bike Brightly Program is an educational campaign encouraging cyclists to ride safely and abide by the law by using head and tail lights when riding their bicycles after dark. In the past three years, the program has tallied the following stats:

**2,200+**  
lights distributed

**200+**  
night riders at  
Bike Brightly events

**65**  
community advocates  
distributing lights locally

**38**  
law enforcement agencies  
distributing lights

**BIKEMAINE.ORG/LIGHTS**

# THE VISION FOR A VIBRANT, INCLUSIVE MOUNTAIN BIKE COMMUNITY IN THE CARRABASSETT VALLEY REGION IS BEING REALIZED

by Peter Smith, President CRNEMBA and Ed Gervais, Vice President CRNEMBA

Build it and They Will Come. According to Carrabassett Valley selectman Bob Luce, "There has been a noticeable increase in the number of vehicles arriving in the Carrabassett Valley with bikes on top". We have a feeling they are coming for the world-class mountain bike trail system. By the end of the 2015 season there will be approximately sixty miles of trails constructed specifically for the mountain biker. These trails are carved out of the rugged terrain here in the Western Mountains of Maine that provide a mix of sensational flow, challenging features and spectacular rock-work. With about 14 miles of beginner trails, 34 miles of intermediate, and 16 miles of expert, there is something for everyone. In addition to the mountain bike specific trails, there are dozens of miles of multiuse trail available and nearly endless tote roads and double track to be explored.

The development of the Carrabassett region trail system enjoys wide support too. In a recent press release, Carrabassett Region Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (CRNEMBA) President Peter Smith announced receipt of a \$50,000 grant from L.L.Bean's Charitable Giving for Conservation and Outdoor Recreation to support the continued development of a world-class mountain bike trail network in the Carrabassett Region. "L.L.Bean is very pleased to support the project to develop a mountain bike destination in the Carrabassett Valley area" reported Mac McKeever, spokesperson for L.L.Bean. The \$50,000 grant will be combined with funding from other sources and generous matching grants from the Town of Carrabassett Valley to generate a total of \$237,000 to be spent in 2015 to expand and improve the network.

There is a vibrant mountain bike community in Carrabassett Valley now and it's having a very positive impact. If you catch up with people on the trail or in the trailhead parking lots and you find riders from wide spectrum of backgrounds: longtime Carrabassett Valley riders who are riding more, locals new to mountain biking, second home owners and skiers that have taken up riding, and avid riders visiting from outside the area.

Cyclists understand the quality-of-life benefits from all this riding, but it's also giving the region a welcome economic boost. The significant financial investments in the trail system have an immediate economic impact on the area through the professional trail builders' wages and equipment rental. More important and enduring are the effects of increased recreational activity. John Beaupre, owner of three local grocery and convenience stores, say "the impact during the summer months is already significant; it's amazing how many cars are pulling into my stores with bikes on them now!"

Sugarloaf ski resort remains the economic cornerstone for the area, but according to Ethan Austin, Sugarloaf's director of marketing & communications, "The growth of mountain biking and the development of the trail network has already had a noticeable impact on summer visitation in Carrabassett Valley. We're excited about the prospect for continued growth in this area, and are looking forward to working with CRNEMBA to help attract new riders to the area." CRNEMBA partner Maine Huts & Trails operates four back-country huts in

the region for hiking, skiing and biking. All are accessible by bike and two are right on the trail network. More riders are staying at the huts and using them as a base or stopping during their day ride for lunch or to refill water bottles or hydration packs.

“One of the things that drew me to CRNEMBA was the inclusiveness of this group” say Ed Gervais, the club’s vice president; “we welcome anyone with an interest to participate”. With over 100 individual and family memberships from all over the state and beyond, Carrabassett Region is the largest chapter of NEMBA in Maine. Participate in a volunteer workday or just come ride with us and you’ll be in the company of riders from age three to seventy-three (and beyond).

CRNEMBA partners with the Town of Carrabassett Valley, Maine Huts & Trails and Sugarloaf to host events for rider of all abilities. The Carrabassett Back Country Bike Challenge race is put on annually by the Town of Carrabassett Valley and draws volunteer support from the region’s mountain biking community. The race, which has 15, 50, and 100km course options, drew more than 200 competitors in 2015. The 100km course, with more than 6,000 feet of climbing, is considered one of the hardest races in New England. Held in April of 2015, the Fat Tire Festival hosted by Sugarloaf with support from CRNEMBA promises to be an annual event and featured the increasingly popular fat-tire bikes.

Under Trail Boss Josh Tauses, a group of professional trail builders will apply their skills and grit to build trails to the highest of International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) standards. These trails are designed and constructed to have minimal environmental impact and require little maintenance. Volunteers have played a significant role in trail building too. During the NEMBA TrailFest 2015, volunteer crews worked on a new section of trail that winds past a wonderful overlook with spectacular views of Sugarloaf Mountain and then into a lollipop loop in a zone with some really remarkable terrain. The work included pruning, raking, benching, and some significant rock work. The trail system would not be possible without the access generously allowed by landowners such as the Penobscot Indian Nation, the Town of Carrabassett Valley, Sugarloaf, the State of Maine, and the Carrabassett Valley Sanitary District.

CRNEMBA invites you to Carrabassett Valley to enjoy the riding, the spectacular mountain environment, and the friendly people you’ll meet on the trails.

Website: [carrabassett.nemba.org](http://carrabassett.nemba.org)

Facebook: [facebook.com/Carrabassett-Region-Nemba-123028401076252](https://www.facebook.com/Carrabassett-Region-Nemba-123028401076252)

