



**Outdoor Recreation Day at the Statehouse
February 12, 2025
Housing Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency and Forestry
Tom Lepasqueur and James Patterson, Co-Owners, L & D Trailworks**

- Who we are
 - Trail building business based in Rochester VT here since 2017
- What we do
 - Consult, Design, Build and Maintain trails primarily for mountain biking & hiking, but also accessible trails, skiing, snowshoeing, VAST etc.
 - We also provide trail building / maintenance clinics in cooperation with Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA) and Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA)
- What does that look like
 - Depending on the type of trail we are building, we work alongside organizations like VMBA chapters, USFS, the State, Towns and private individuals to develop a plan and identify a corridor and construct a trail using a combination of very small mechanized equipment and hand labor in the forest to create a trail that is enjoyable for the intended audience and built sustainably.
 - This is labor intensive and heavily dependent on an experienced team.
 - In 2024 L&D consisted of four members working in the field completing approximately 20 trail projects.
- Why do we do this
 - A growing number of people who want to get out in the outdoors. To relax, to play, to get a break, to get a workout, to share an experience.
- Here's what we've been up to
 - Maintenance work
 - Not so glamorous work of preparing trails for a year of riding in places like Stowe and Little River State Park.
 - Building trails for connectivity

- Providing trail connectivity between existing trail networks at Silver Lake and Moosalmoo Campgrounds in Ripton VT
 - Building trails for communities
 - Bethel trail behind the school and rec center
 - Velomont Trail
 - Continued involvement in the design and construction of segments of the Velomont trail that provide connectivity between existing trail networks and communities.
 - Adaptive Friendly Trail
 - Trails that are inclusive to those with disabilities in places like The Driving Range in Bolton and in proximity Vermont Hut's accessible hut in Chittenden.
 - VOBA / VMBA Trail maintenance / building workshops
 - Educating other trail professionals and volunteers on the proper techniques to create lasting outdoor infrastructure in their communities.
- What we are trying to accomplish is to create high quality infrastructure
 - Outdoor recreation is a major economic driver in the State; Vermont ranks 2nd in the nation for contributions to state gross domestic product (4.8% of GDP), totaling \$2.1 B.
 - That benefits communities and the businesses in those communities
 - Improves quality of life
 - Incentivizes folks to live and visit Vermont
 - Provides wide range of trail types that are accessible to a wide range of trail users
 - Build resilient trails that take into consideration the growing desire for trails and a changing climate.
- Opportunities and Challenges
 - We both moved here from another state because Vermont has an attractive outdoor culture and a clear need for trail builders and high quality trail infrastructure. As mountain bikers, VMBA's forward thinking stance and role as a facilitator of funding and land access was well ahead of surrounding regions.
 - As the Outdoor Recreation Industry continues to grow and the burden on trail networks and volunteer run operations continues to increase the need for professional builders and maintainers like ourselves is going to continue to increase. But that alone does not equate to funding and access.

- We think there is a clear opportunity here for this state to continue to leverage and build upon its reputation for outdoor rec. To establish Vermont as THE destination in the Northeast by investing in high quality trail infrastructure and the workforce to support it.
 - Moving forward, what the trailbuilding sector looks like in Vermont is unclear. We hope the State will lean into this opportunity. Some of our neighbors are taking action, Western Mass investing in multiple trail networks, Maine recently allocated 30million to outdoor rec. They see this as a future opportunity and investment.
 - Right-sizing State funding for stewardship and climate-resilient improvements of our outdoor assets and outdoor products and services is a long-term investment in the future of Vermont.
 - We also encourage state investment in professionalization of the trail workforce through trade and climate training programs to ensure the wide application of best management and stewardship practices, attraction of new professionals to the field, and career advancement.
 - Additionally, businesses development and project funding support are essential to starting and growing trail building businesses like ours so we can hire experienced professionals and take on the Vermont legacy building and maintenance projects well into the future.
- We're here because we want to live here, build here, raise our kids here and we see the immense opportunity for what could be.