

Ascutney Outdoors

Brownsville, VT
VOREC Grant Recipient

Town of West Windsor
Ascutney Trails Association



History

- Ascutney Ski Area (@500 acres) went bankrupt in 2010 for the last time
 - Town Forest (created in 1979) about 1100 acres and used for recreation (mountain biking, hiking, hunting) and forest management
 - Town had to decide – purchase ski area and add to Town forest or leave its' future use up to fate
 - Purchase in 2014
- Ascutney Outdoors, a non-profit was formed in 2015 to manage land and recreation uses



Ski Area Closure Impacts

- Adjacent Mt Ascutney Resort faced financial challenges
- Property values fell
- General Store closed
- Economic and social vitality of the community threatened



Infrastructure Upgrades

- Original Ski Lodge Burned
 - Demolition necessary
 - New Lodge Built to Scale
- Ski Lifts Removed and Sold
 - Gas rope tow built
 - Used T bar purchased
 - Tubing Lift built



The New York Times

A Town That Saved a Mountain, and a Mountain That Saved a Town

After the Ascutney ski resort in Vermont closed because of erratic snowfall and mismanagement, it threatened to take with it the nearby town of West Windsor. The community took the situation into its own hands.



The Ascutney ski resort once boasted 1,800 vertical feet of skiing on over 50 trails. When it closed for the last time in 2010, it was a crushing blow to the town of West Windsor. Caleb Kenna for The New York Times

The Community Rallied!



Residents and local contractors volunteered their time and expertise



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VOREC Grant Enabled Improvements

- Electrification and upgrade of Rope Tow
- Purchase of Ski Equipment for School' Ski Program
- Design and Construction of Mountain Bike Skills Park and Flow Trails
- Development of Discovery Trail extension on Trail to Town
- Marketing Brochure and Map



Benefits

- Our general store and café is now an active part of the community
 - Added revenue from visitors to the mountain (year round) has been beneficial
 - General store caters events at the mountain
- VOREC Grant projects added to our infrastructure and benefited children, teens and families, attracting more to the Mountain and the Resort.
 - Now an Annual High School Mtn Bike Race
 - Second year of Vermont Youth Cycling Summer Race Series (attracts youth from all over New England).
 - Skills Park and Flow Trails make the area more appealing to younger generation of mountain bikers.
 - Rope Tow upgrade easier for volunteers to operate (start and stop and variable speeds) and easier on users
 - Local bike and ski shops appreciate more business





Trail to Town

- The Discovery Trail extension connects the Outdoor Center and mountain to Town with interpretive signage along the way educating users on the cultural and natural history of the area and on flooding and stormwater management (which has had an impact on the Village).

Overall Results

- Our Town owned land no longer faces the possibility of another bankruptcy at the ski area
- West Windsor gained residents – 23% increase since 2010 census
- Our general store which also went bankrupt is now a thriving store and café attracting many mountain visitors
- Our town forest is forever conserved – rich unfragmented habitat with adjacent State Park and recreation uses
- Our community rallied successfully and recognizes it is stronger when we work together

