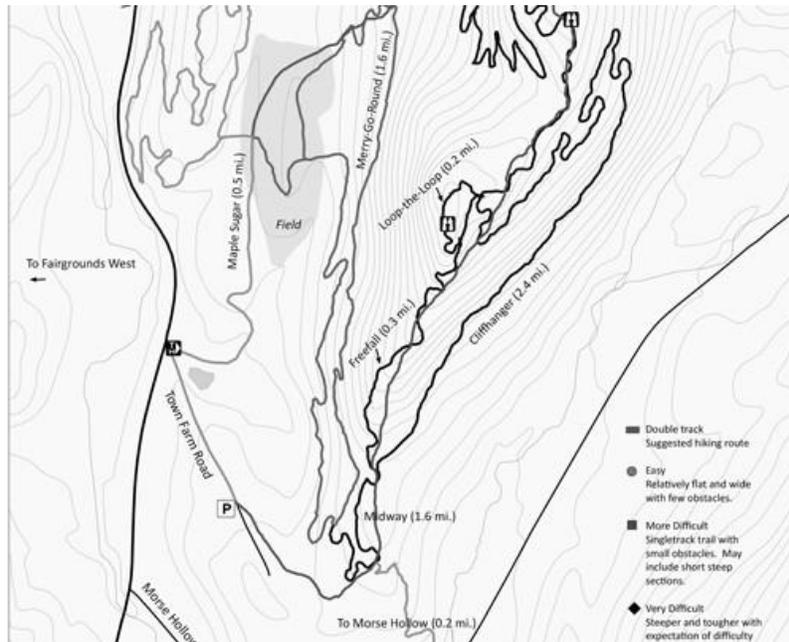


New bike recreation in East Poultney

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By Lani Duke

POULTNEY— The Slate Valley Trails Association plans to open 6 miles of new mountain biking and hiking trails on Route 140 in East Poultney with skill levels ranging from beginner to expert. The entire 10-mile project is expected to be complete this fall.

Formed in 2015 to build and maintain new hiking and biking trails in the Slate Valley, marketing the region as recreational hub, the group first broke trails in the Delaney Woods in Wells the following year. They built 3.5 miles of trails there, and more than 7 miles of trails on Endless Brook Road in Poultney.

The new trails are being laid on a 200-acre parcel of privately owned land anonymously donated for public trail use. The site has a history of public use as home to a Poultney country fair in the early 1900s. The trail network's name reflects that history: Fairgrounds. The trails will bear the names of fair attractions such as Bumper Cars, Midway, and Cliffhanger, SVT board member Tammy Alexander mentioned in an earlier statement.

She foresees the trails as a boost to the Poultney economy, bringing vacationers to hike and bike, and eating out and shopping while they are in town.

Hardy Avery of Sustainable Trailworks, building the Fairgrounds trail system with his seasonal crew, hopes the local youth will use the trails to build their skills, and that expert mountain bike enthusiasts use the difficult sections. A small shelter with restrooms is planned for the trailhead, as are "kid-specific activities."

The trail will celebrate its opening Saturday, Sept. 1, and invites the public to try out the new trails. A brief presentation will start the event at 1 p.m., after which there will be guided mountain bike rides as well as hikes. Park on Town Farm Road.