

Guide to the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail

All Aboard the Milk Train!

SEGMENT DESCRIPTIONS

St. Albans to Sheldon Junction
Open, quiet farmland from St. Albans to Green's Corners. Beautiful wetlands and pines with some residential areas from Green's Corners to Sheldon Springs. Few road crossings, mostly of gravel roads.

Sheldon Junction to Enosburg Falls
The trail parallels the Missisquoi River offering scenic views of river rapids, quiet pools, working farms, and Jay Peak. Look for fox, deer, and other wildlife. Three crossings of VT 105.

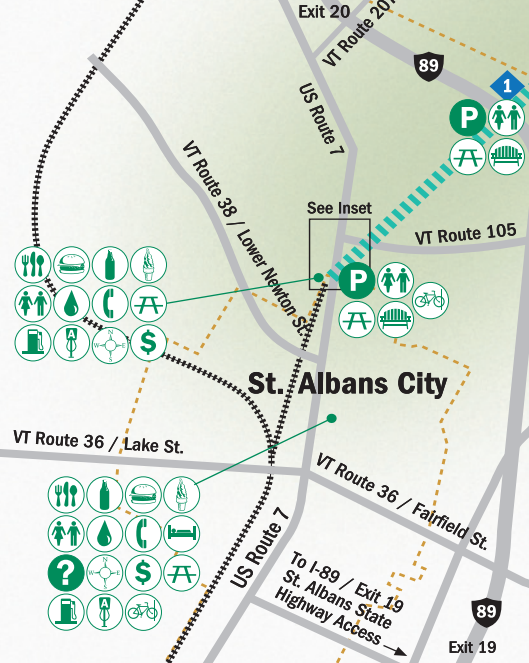
Enosburg Falls to Richford
The trail parallels the Missisquoi River with outstanding views. The landscape offers a nice mix of sunny farmland, shaded forests, and quiet wetlands. Good segment for bird watchers. Multiple crossings of VT 105.

Please thank our local business owners for their generosity in providing restrooms, water, and other services that benefit trail users!

St. Albans – The Rail City
Mile 0
Known as "Rail City," St. Albans has been home to the New England Central Railroad for more than 100 years. It has a vibrant downtown that reflects the railroad's influence. Visit downtown to shop at local businesses, tour Taylor Park or the St. Albans Historical Museum, and take a self-guided walk. The city hosts frequent festivals and special events, including the Vermont Maple Festival in April, Christmas in Taylor Park, and a Saturday farmer's market (May-Oct.) in Taylor Park.

A Feast of Farmland
Miles 0-3
Standing in the former tracks of the Central Vermont Railway, the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail continues an historic link between St. Albans, Sheldon, Enosburg, East Berkshire, and Richford. Farm-to-village commerce and international trade flowed through the corridor along a plank road in the late 1800s. It continued by rail until a derailment permanently closed the route in 1984.

The State of Vermont and local citizens began converting the corridor to a multi-use trail in the early 1990s. Many traces of the railroad "Milk Run" days still exist along the trail for you to discover, including train stations, rail sidings, and creamery foundations.



The St. Albans parking area is on the old railroad bed located at the intersection of US 7/Main Street and VT 105, just north of the St. Albans Messenger building. This is a busy intersection, and trail users are advised to use caution as they approach. The parking area entrance is marked with a green and yellow MVRT sign. A bicycle is mounted on a post near the sign. Trailer parking is available.

The trail travels through cultivated fields and pasture land in this segment. Farm crossings are an historic part of the trail's rural experience – watch your step or walk your bicycle at these crossings to avoid mud splatters and cow plops. At Green's Corners, trail users must cross VT 105. A creamery was once located on the land across from the cemetery, which you can explore to find hidden pieces of Vermont history.

Swanton Wetlands
Miles 3-5
Trees, hills, and wetlands fill the landscape on this section of the trail. Always stay on the trail and respect the privacy of trail neighbors. Snowmobiles can travel to Highgate using VAST 207 near mile 5. This is a beautiful segment for viewing fall foliage.

Wetlands (Swamps, Marshes, Bogs, etc.) – Wetlands refer to areas where water is a controlling factor in the development of plant and animal communities. Franklin County is full of wetlands. In the past, some were modified to increase agricultural productivity. Now, farms rely on wetlands to filter runoff and maintain local water quality.

A Working Wildlife Habitat – Wetlands are great places for converting sunshine into food. They support a wide variety of plants that sustain wildlife. Acre for acre, wetlands produce more wildlife – in numbers and variety – and more plant growth than any other habitat. Wildlife, like the Canada goose, wood duck, great blue heron, muskrat, beaver, and bullfrog, depend on the dense vegetation in wetlands to build homes and hide from predators. Other wildlife, like black bear, moose, deer, and marsh hawks, use wetlands for a part of their life cycle or during certain times of the year.

Share the Trail with Wildlife – Listen for the musical sounds of songbirds in the forest and frogs in the wetlands along this section of the trail. Watch for chipmunks darting across the trail and turtles warming themselves on rocks. Small snakes enjoy sunning themselves on the trail in open areas. They are not poisonous. We hope you'll quietly enjoy their company and share the trail with all wildlife.

Historic Sheldon
Miles 5-9
The trail parallels Sweet Hollow Road and travels through the village of Sheldon Springs. South of the village, trail users must cross VT 105. Always use extra caution on VT 105. Snowmobiles are not permitted on Vermont roadways. North of the village, the trail ducks into a sweet-smelling pine forest.

Sheldon acquired considerable importance as a summer resort in the 1800s due to the town's abundance of mineral springs. Springwater was bottled for distribution and was marketed as a remedy for cancer, scrofula, and other diseases of the blood. Large hotels, some containing up to 100 private rooms, were erected throughout the town and "furnished in a style of first class city hotels." (Vermont Historical Magazine). Sheldon Springs became a mill town in 1894 when Joseph Shipley began producing ground wood pulp at the Missisquoi Mill. The ownership of the mill has changed throughout the years, but the mill itself remains a stable employer for the community. Housing originally built for mill workers is readily identifiable in Sheldon Springs along VT 105 due to its repetition of design.

After Sheldon Springs, the landscape is filled with cultivated fields and pastureland. Enjoy a scenic view of the Missisquoi River from the historic railroad bridge in Sheldon Junction or a rest stop at the picnic table. Hidden in the grass east of the railroad bridge and across from Bourdeau Brothers business is the railroad junction for which this small village was named.

The Central Vermont Railway (the Rail Trail) transported milk and other agricultural products from Richford to St. Albans. In Sheldon Junction, it crossed the St. Johnsbury and Lake Champlain Railway, which extended from Swanton to New Hampshire. The State of Vermont and its partners are currently working to convert the abandoned St. Johnsbury line into a rail trail as well (future Lamoille Valley Rail Trail).

River Rapids
Miles 9-12
The trail hugs the Missisquoi River. VT 105 can be a noisy neighbor at times, but scenic views of the Missisquoi River rapids and Jay Peak make you forget the noise. Artists often use this segment of the trail to paint landscapes. In June, colorful wildflowers line the trail.

Private homes abut the trail near mile 10. Please stay on the trail and respect the privacy and property of trail neighbors. Use extra caution when crossing VT 105. Snowmobiles can connect to the VAST system near mile 11.3.

Corn Alley
Miles 12-16
In summers, this segment can be described as "corn alley" because the trail is lined by rows of corn on both sides. Franklin County farmers grow corn and other grains for silage to feed cattle. Silage is any variety of fermented, coarsely chopped grain. It provides a nutritious feed for livestock. Silage is stored in concrete-lined bins or in fields under long, plastic-tarped rows.

This sunny section provides a relaxed ride. During haying, generally early July, you may be lucky enough to see the hay baler at work around mile 15.5. This dynamic machine spins and rotates large round hay bales while encasing them in white plastic. The plastic protects the bales from winter weather for outside storage. Be sure to stay on the trail, especially if the baler is at work. Safety first! Use extra caution when crossing VT 105 west of Enosburg Falls.

Postcard Perfect
Miles 17-22
The landscape returns to postcard-perfect views of Missisquoi River rapids, Jay Peak, and adjacent farms. This is a relaxed and spectacular section for those who like a varied landscape, and a beautiful segment for fall foliage viewing. Use caution when crossing VT 105.

While the trail grade is minimal, you may notice its effects if you are cycling easily. Although the trail looks flat, this section requires steady pedaling to keep you moving. For cyclists heading west, you'll have a nice coasting ride into Enosburg Falls.

Travelers heading north have a spectacular view of Jay Peak, an historic iron bridge, and adjacent farmland. Northbound users can also see the foundation of a former power station dam in the Missisquoi River near Samsomville. The dam once powered several mills and an electric plant. Its breached remains offer challenging rapids for experienced river paddlers along the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, a 740-mile water trail tracing historic Native American travel routes across New York, Vermont, Québec, New Hampshire, and Maine. The Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail parallels the Canoe Trail along the Missisquoi River through Franklin County.

Enosburg Falls
Miles 16-17
Enosburg Falls was a unique community in the 1800s due in part to Dr. Kendall and his Spavin Cure medicinal recipes. Bone spavin is a bony growth within the lower hock (ankle) joint of horse or cattle. It is caused by osteoarthritis or the final phase of degenerative joint disease. In the 1870s, Dr. B.J. Kendall's cure for horse spavin and the completion of the Missisquoi Valley Railroad propelled the sleepy village of Enosburg Falls into a center for business and residential development.

In the 1900s and continuing today, the dairy industry became very important. Enosburg became known as the "Dairy Capital of the World" with a bustling and vibrant downtown known as Enosburg Falls. Since 1956, the annual "June Dairy Days" festival has celebrated Enosburg's agricultural heritage. Held the first weekend in June, the festival provides activities for all ages, including live music, cow paddy bingo, garden tractor pulls, the "Milk Run" footrace, and a parade.

Birder's Pleasure
Miles 22-25
The first part of this section provides a relaxed ride through an agricultural landscape. Use extra caution when crossing VT 105 on the east side of East Berkshire. Cyclists who want to extend their trip can leave the trail with a choice of on-road loops to Montgomery and Montgomery Center.

Civil War Invades Vermont
On October 19, 1864, 22 Confederate agents, dressed in civilian clothes, robbed three banks in St. Albans. Their take was \$200,000. They fled across the border to Montreal on stolen horses. The Canadian government arrested the raiders and returned the money, but their actions did not calm the fears or reduce the anger of the northern states. American troops were ordered to pursue the raiders into Canada and wipe them out. This would have violated Canadian neutrality and possibly started a war. President Lincoln revoked the order, realizing that a Canadian-American conflict would only serve to help the South.

On-Road Loops
Loop A Morse's Line – 32.2 miles
Morse's Line loop travels through Franklin County farmland and almost into Canada. It is mostly on paved roads, with great views of Lake Carmi, Jay Peak, and Pinnacle Peak. The best view of Lake Carmi can be seen at mile 2.6 with Pinnacle Peak in Quebec visible beyond the lake. Another good view of Pinnacle Peak is from mile 11.0. Jay Peak can be admired from Cassidy Rd. (mile 13.0). This route passes through the villages of Franklin and Highgate Center.

This route passes through the village of Sheldon.

Loop B East Sheldon – 23.2 miles
East Sheldon loop is mostly paved with great views of the Missisquoi River, surrounding farm land, and Jay Peak. It also passes several areas of historic significance. At 1.4 miles is a marker dedicated to Colonel Elisha Sheldon (1741-1805) for whom the town of Sheldon is named. Col. Sheldon was commissioned by General George Washington in 1776 to raise a regiment of cavalry (the 2nd Continental Light Dragoons) which served during the Revolutionary War. His house still stands on the hill above the marker.

At mile 1.7 is a marker commemorating the site of Civil War action on October 19, 1864, involving a 22-man Confederate detachment on their retreat to Canada after an attack on St. Albans (referred to as the St. Albans Raid). Also at this site, a covered bridge was set on fire but saved by alert citizens.

Loop C Lake Carmi – 15.3 miles
Lake Carmi loop is mostly paved and passes through beautiful countryside with wonderful views of Lake Carmi and Jay Peak. The many hills are easy and gradual. At mile 2.0 the Lake comes into view with the Jay Peak ski area tram house visible to the east about 20 miles away. The route passes Lake Carmi's public access area at mile 6.8. Lake Carmi State Park offers seasonal camping and a beach; its entrance is located at mile 10.5.

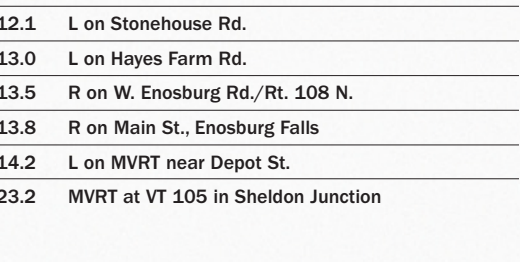
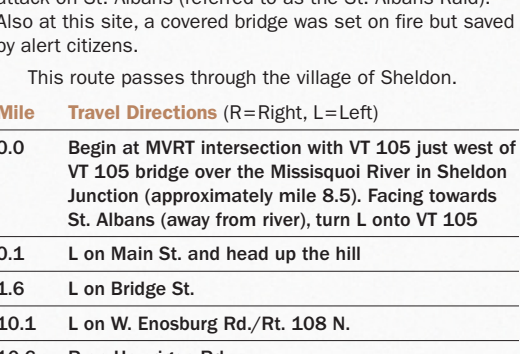
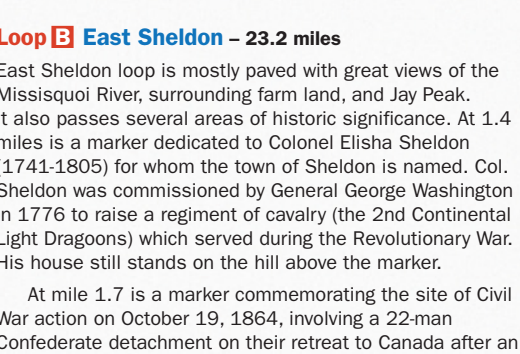
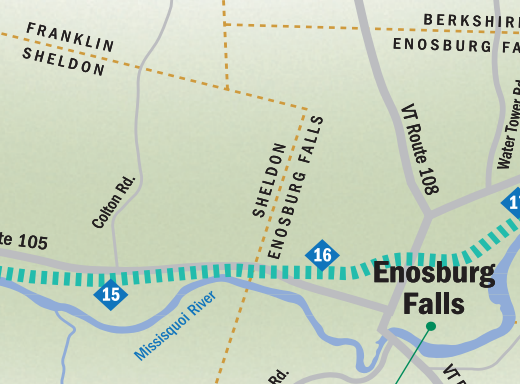
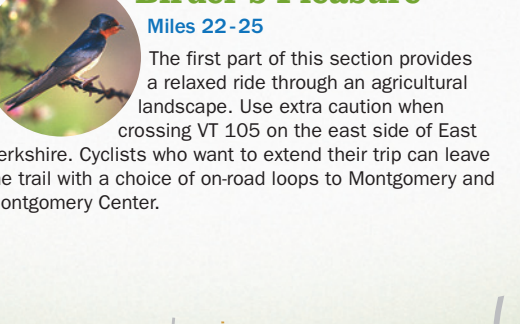
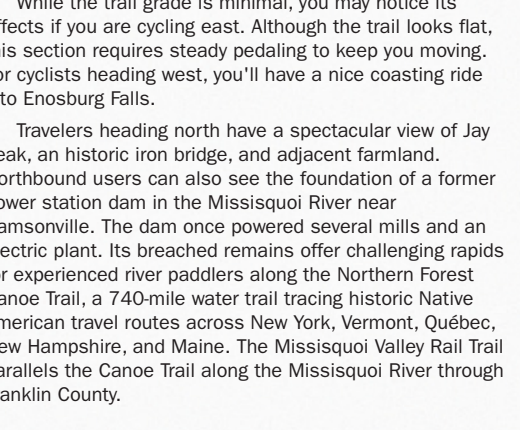
Lake Carmi State Park offers seasonal camping and a beach; its entrance is located at mile 10.5.

Loop D Mineral Brook – 17.7 miles
Mineral Brook loop travels over mostly unpaved roads, past active farms in northern Franklin County and the beautiful Mineral Brook area with its woods, fields, and marshes. There are wonderful views of Lake Carmi and Jay Peak. The Vaillancourt Orchard, located at mile 1.7, has a farm stand and picnic area. The route also passes the South Franklin Cemetery with gravestones dating back as early as 1813 and maple trees easily measuring three feet in diameter.

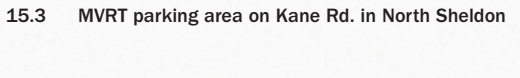
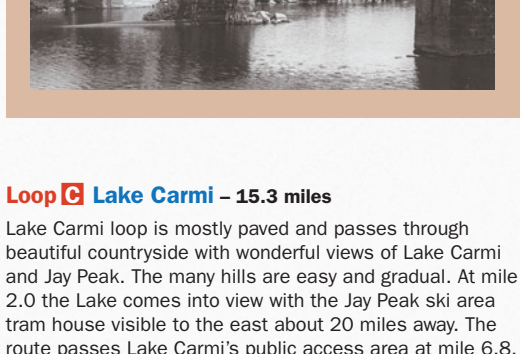
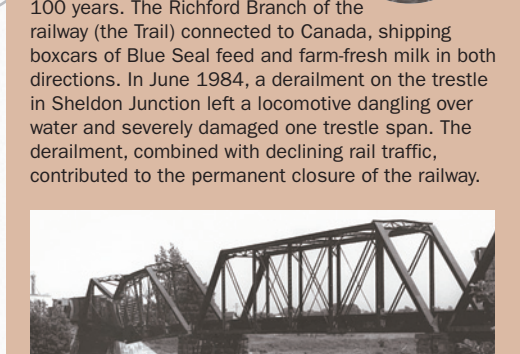
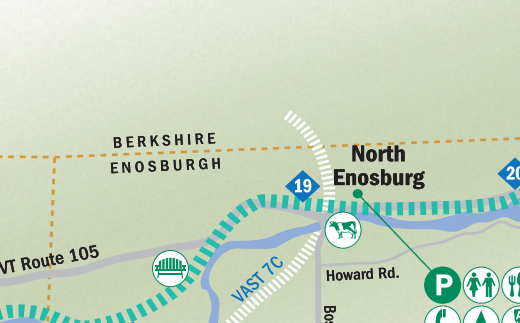
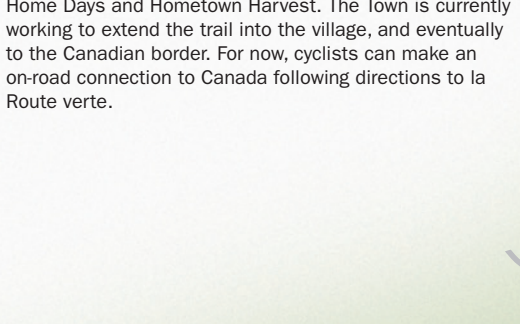
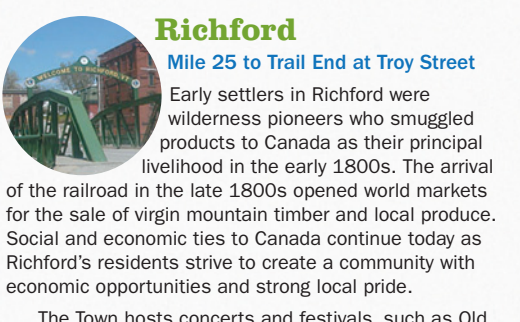
Loop E North Branch – 7.1 miles
North Branch loop is an easy ride on both paved and unpaved surfaces. There are wonderful views of the North Branch of the Missisquoi River and the mountains in the area. The route passes through Richford's village center, over some moderate hills, and follows the river (on your left) along Marvin Rd. where great blue herons and the occasional kingfisher can be seen.

Richford
Mile 25 to Trail End at Troy Street
Early settlers in Richford were wilderness pioneers who smuggled products to Canada as their principal livelihood in the early 1800s. The arrival of the railroad in the late 1800s opened world markets for the sale of virgin mountain timber and local produce. Social and economic ties to Canada continue today as Richford's residents strive to create a community with economic opportunities and strong local pride.

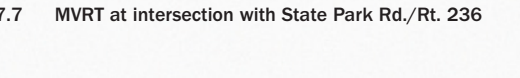
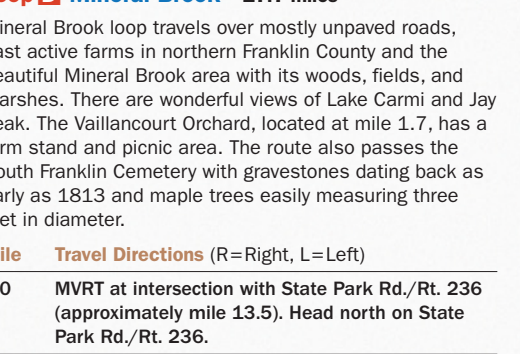
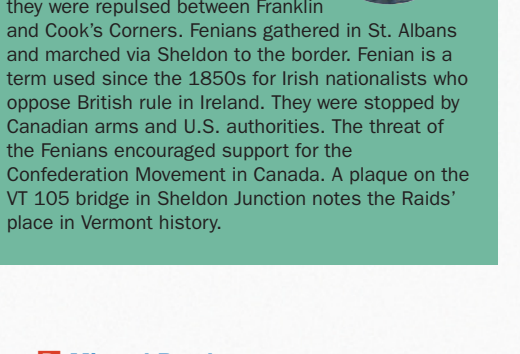
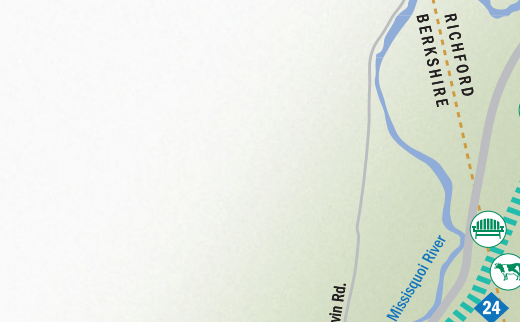
The Town hosts concerts and festivals, such as Old Home Days and Hometown Harvest. The Town is currently working to extend the trail into the village, and eventually to the Canadian border. For now, cyclists can make an on-road connection to Canada following directions to la Route verte.



Train Derailment Closes Track!
The Central Vermont Railway (now New England Central Railroad) has had its headquarters in St. Albans for over 100 years. The Richford Branch of the railway (the Trail) connected to Canada, shipping boxcars of Blue Seal feed and farm-fresh milk in both directions. In June 1984, a derailment on the trestle in Sheldon Junction left a locomotive dangling over water and severely damaged one trestle span. The derailment, combined with declining rail traffic, contributed to the permanent closure of the railway.



Richford Inset Scale 1 inch = 1/3 mile



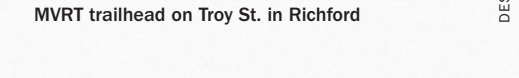
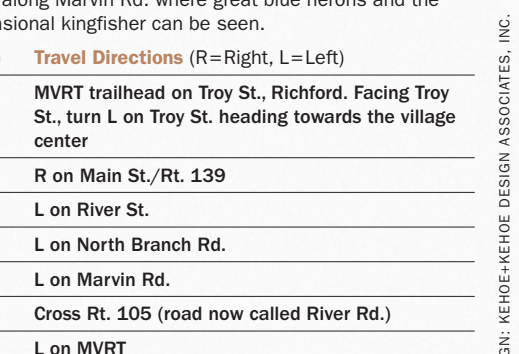
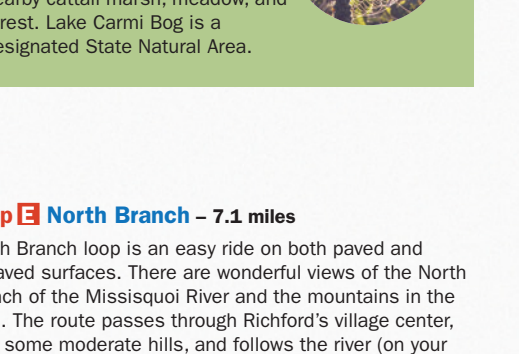
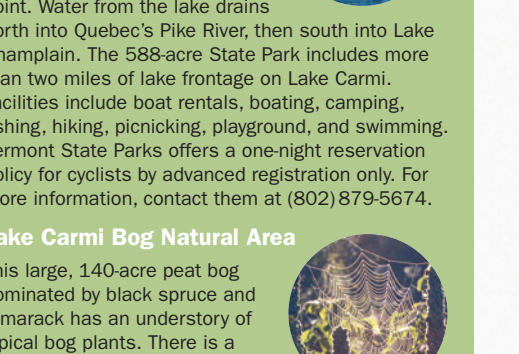
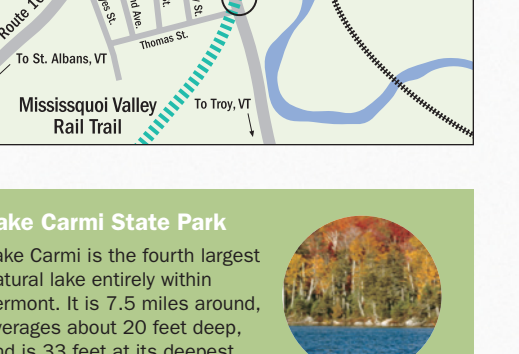
Lake Carmi State Park
Lake Carmi is the fourth largest natural lake entirely within Vermont. It is 7.5 miles around, averages about 20 feet deep, and is 33 feet at its deepest point. Water from the lake drains north into Quebec's Pike River, then south into Lake Champlain. The 588-acre State Park includes more than two miles of lake frontage on Lake Carmi. Facilities include boat rentals, boating, camping, fishing, hiking, picnicking, playground, and swimming. Vermont State Parks offers a one-night reservation policy for cyclists by advanced registration only. For more information, contact them at (802) 879-5674.

Lake Carmi Bog Natural Area
This large, 140-acre peat bog dominated by black spruce and tamarack has an understory of typical bog plants. There is a nearby cattail marsh, meadow, and forest. Lake Carmi Bog is a designated State Natural Area.

Finian Raids
After the Civil War in 1866 and again in 1870, Irish patriots attempted to invade Canada and force Britain to negotiate the independence of Ireland. In 1870, they were repulsed between Franklin and Cook's Corners. Fenians gathered in St. Albans and marched via Sheldon to the border. Fenian is a term used since the 1850s for Irish nationalists who opposed British rule in Ireland. They were stopped by Canadian arms and U.S. authorities. The threat of the Fenians encouraged support for the Confederation Movement in Canada. A plaque on the VT 105 bridge in Sheldon Junction notes the Raids' place in Vermont history.

Map Symbol Legend

Convenience Store	Picnic Table	Maps Available	Trail Mile Marker
Ice Cream	Telephone	Parking	Farm Crossing
Delicatessen	Information	Air	River Access
Restaurant	Bench	Gasoline	ATM Machine
Lodging	Bicycle Rack	Snowmobile Repair	Railroad
Restroom	Water	Bicycle Repair Supplies	VAST Trail
			MVRT Trail



DESIGN: KEROE-MEHOE DESIGN ASSOCIATES, INC.

