

What's the new Funtrack in East Sandwich? Bike jumps, dirt and curves



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Cape Cod Times

Dec. 3, 2025, 5:04 a.m. ET



- A new half-mile "Funtrack" for mountain biking has opened at Oak Ridge School in East Sandwich.
- The track was designed and built by the New England Mountain Bike Association's Cape Cod chapter in partnership with the town.
- The track is open to the public outside of school hours and is designed for all ages and abilities, including adaptive cyclists.

EAST SANDWICH — Bill Boles' face was flush from the cold winds that swept around him as he carefully whipped his mountain bicycle around the new Funtrack biking trail, nestled in the wooded area of [Oak Ridge School](#).

Despite the frigid temperatures, a smile remained on Boles' face as he navigated the track, which is equipped with bike jumps, boardwalk bikeways, and packed dirt pathways.

Boles and others from the New England Mountain Bike Association's Cape Cod chapter designed and built the track for area children in partnership with the town. He hopes the roughly .5 acre track can offer kids an option for outside learning.



It's also the kind of track, Boles said, that can bring adventure to people of all ages. The track is open to families during non-school hours, he said.

"I'm an old kid," said Boles, a retired journalist. "And the old kids get to play on the Funtrack too."

The bigger picture

The .5 mile track at the school, said association member [David Lafreniere](#), is an extension of the roughly 110 miles of contiguous trails that the association has helped create and maintain throughout the Upper Cape.

There are longer tracks in the works too. In April, the association proposed a 1.5 mile trail to the Sandwich Conservation Commission that could wind up [Discovery Hill](#) in Sandwich. Discovery Hill is one of the tallest peaks on the Cape, said Lafreniere.

"The trail would allow not just mountain bikers, but also hikers, trail runners, cross country skiers to get to the summit," said Lafreniere, who was interviewed by the Times on Friday, Nov. 28, at the Funtrack.

The association is still in the process of gaining approval for that project, said Lafreniere.



Why a Funtrack in Sandwich?

The association built the track to expand the after-school mountain biking program association members teach for six weeks at Oak Ridge in the spring and fall, said Boles.

The program, which includes children between the ages of 8 and 12, is an initiative coordinated by the association and the town's recreation department.

"We want to promote the sport of mountain biking," said Boles. "But we also want children to have a good time."

The association has been running the program in conjunction with the town for roughly eight years, said Boles.

How was the track built?

The Funtrack took about 400 volunteer hours and roughly \$4,100 to build. Funds to build the track came from the association "at no cost to the town," said Boles.

"After about four weeks we finished the Funtrack," said Boles. "And it's wildly popular already."

The group, said Boles, had proposed the track to the school committee after a smaller version of the Funtrack was developed within the [Maple Swamp Conservation area](#), he said.

"The school showed a lot of interest and told us to go for it," said Boles.

The width of the track, said Lafreniere, was also built to accommodate adaptive cyclists. Adaptive cycling, he said, is a type of cycling that is designed for people with disabilities.



What is the New England Mountain Bike Association?

The association, a nonprofit, is a community of mountain bikers focused on recreational trails advocacy with 36 chapters throughout New England and 10,000 members.

The association's goal, according to its website, is to promote the best that mountain biking has to offer, steward trail systems and ensure access to open space. The Cape Cod chapter was created in the late 1990s and maintains roughly 1,200 miles of trails across the Cape, according to its website.

The association holds fundraising events year-round and will hold a Toys for Tots ride beginning at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 7, at the Cape Cod Airfield. The group brings enough unwrapped gifts, said Boles, to fill a truck. "It's the biggest event we do all year," he said.

Bike track brings nostalgia for big old kids

Association member Bob Lauterbach joined Boles and Lafreniere on the Funtrack on Friday and told the Times he started biking and joined the association when he was 61 years old.

"What's really great is that the trails are for everybody. All over the Cape people are out on trails, and we love that," he said.

For Lafreniere, biking has allowed him to reconnect with his childhood.

"When we were kids, you woke up in the morning and your parents said, 'Go outside and play. I'll let you know when it's time for dinner,'" said Lauterbach. "That's what we are really about."

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