

ECRT volunteer Jim Cielencki combines love of outdoors with great design

Jim Cielencki has an eye for the extraordinary, a passion for exercise and a degree in urban planning. So, when the ECRT Board approached Jim to help us with some trail photography and graphic design work, it was truly the perfect match!

Today Jim serves as a graphic designer for national health insurer Meritain Health, an Aetna company. But he didn't always fit into a corporate role. Jim grew up in Cheektowaga, NY as a child of the 80's. He spent all his spare time snowboarding, skateboard, and riding BMX bikes. He went to UB for geology, but, got so good at biking that he took a break to follow his passion which turned into a 13-year career as a professional BMX biker! That allowed him to travel the world and to learn photography along the way.

In 2005, Jim opened a local skate/BMX shop on Elmwood Avenue called Sunday Skate where he co-founded a BMX bike, also called Sunday, a brand well known to serious bikers and local shops, like Berts.

Jim returned to grad school in 2017 where he earned a degree in urban planning. During his "Mile by Mile Buffalo" project, Jim ran every street in Buffalo. Then he narrowed his focus to developing "passive recreation" spaces. Like a rail trail, that provide anyone the opportunity to use the space anytime. With his degree in hand, creative background, love of nature, and experience in marketing and photography, Jim was tapped to film drone footage for the WNY Land Conservancy's Riverline Trail. It was that impressive video that got ECRT's attention. When he learned about our efforts to bring the ECRT trail to life, he eagerly offered to help.



Over the past 2 years, Jim has filmed spectacular drone footage of the entire 27-mile ECRT rail trail which you can see today on our website. He has captured video interviews during trail events and taken hundreds of pictures of key points of interest on the trail. Most recently, Jim designed the ECRT holiday thank you message that went to all of supporters. Jim is always looking for a visual way to get our message out and to give people a new perspective of the trail.

Thank you, Jim for your dedication to ECRT and for the many hours you have devoted to this cause!