

Jonathan Miner
Epsom, NH
LD 404

I strongly urge the citizens of Maine to not remove the rails from the former Mountain Division. Leaving the rails in place, and building a trail alongside makes the trail more open to a wider variety of trail users, encouraging more people to use the trails, and encouraging more people to join volunteer organizations which support the trails. One of the Nation's most recognized examples is the Cotton Valley Rail Trail in Wolfeboro NH, which has been a successful collaboration among railroad enthusiasts, snowmobile clubs, walkers, joggers, bikers, cross-country skiers.

The trail supporters who claim that this will bring tourism are simply wrong. There continues to be no evidence that people are travelling to walk a rail trail; they are used by locals, people who are already in the communities and already spending money locally. There are a few people who "collect" mileage, and will visit an area to visit a trail, but only once. If the rails are kept in place, the Mountain Division will remain a destination for railroad enthusiasts, and they will visit year after year, supporting local businesses.

As others will probably say, it costs nothing to leave the rails in place. More funding can be dedicated toward building the trail, and there's no worries of disposing of railroad ties and other debris. Despite promises from some groups, scrapping the rail does not cover the cost of building the trail, and in NH we've seen cases where used ties were simply left in the woods instead of being disposed.

Please support a multiuse trail, leaving the rails in place, to preserve the history of the corridor for future generations.

Thank you for your time.