

Caitlin Rice
Topsham
LD 29

My name is Caitlin Rice, resident of Topsham, employed in Bowdoinham. I'm in favor to commence converting the decommissioned railroad tracks to a rail trail, and to be used as a multi-use trail.

I would use the trail primarily, and possibly exclusively, to be able to ride my horse. My horse and I enjoy competing in the sport of endurance, traveling between 25-50 miles, with the dream of completing a 1 day 100 mile ride. Due to the difficult task of finding trails that offer sufficient mileage to condition, plus decent footing that allows my horse and I to travel faster than a walk, it is rather tricky to find trails to suit our needs.

Each year, of the trails available to use, more and more are becoming inaccessible. This eliminates entire trail systems, cuts them short, or puts us in a dangerous position to ride down the side of roads to get from trailhead to trailhead. Unfortunately many drivers are not aware of the laws, and put not only my horse and me in danger due to reckless behavior, but also themselves and potentially other motorists.

Having a vast trail system available to me so close to home would mean less time traveling to get to trails, meaning I can spend more of my money locally, purchasing food, drinks, and fueling up my truck. Many equestrians would also come to use this trail system, bringing more income to local gas stations, convenient stores, restaurants, etc.

Many of us that are avid trail riders are already accustomed to four wheelers, dirtbikes, snowmobiles and UTVs, and I would also like to see them have access to these trails as well. The Whistlestop Rail Trail is a multi-use trail, and I have no more issues with the people riding motorized vehicles than I do bicyclists or walkers. I also feel having more eyes on the trail provides more safety, keeping honest people honest. Motorized vehicles would also allow someone who may become injured a faster escape from trail and to safety or help.