

Lynn Knowlton
Standish
LD 676

My name is Lynn Knowlton, I live in Standish at the Richville Crossing), I am writing in support allowing the Mountain Division corridor to become a trail with LD 676 to help fund the building of the trail. The best use for the state-owned Mountain Division corridor is a paved trail for walkers, bikers, and runners, which will be accessible to people of all ages and abilities. This trail extension will connect to the 9 miles of Mountain Division rail-trail that already exists in Fryeburg and in Gorham and Windham.

The trail will also protect the railbed which with deteriorating rails and ties cannot. There is already increased use on the undeveloped portion that is causing erosion beside the bed until the rails are lifted and debris removed will continue.

As a child I watched the trains waving to the Engineers and Caboose Brakeman. I sold lemonade at the crossing to the railroad workmen in the summer. As hard as it will be to see the rails taken up I know that the old rails with rotten timbers are not the proper foundation for today or tomorrow's infrastructure. This eroding past is making walking dangerous limiting not just the young or older residents ability to enjoy the area, but my own.

Living near the rail bed I see many people that pass enjoying this space in Nature. Neighbors and strangers from all over who park beside the crossing or at the Richville Library dog walk, exercise, mountain bike, atv, snowmobile, Cross Country Ski, gain access to fishing or camping spots. Even the coyotes, deer, and other animals use it. By upgrading the Railroad bed to a trail for now opens access to more opportunities for safer recreation. It can also build community and local small business around the trail in areas like Baldwin, Hiram, and Baldwin. Food trucks, Shuttle/ rental/ repair services, and Hostels will be welcome additions all along this trail. The library has more open hours to be an accesible bathroom stop.

Thank you,
Lynn R. Knowlton