

Christopher Meier  
Mount Washington Valley Trails Association  
LD 676

I am Chris Meier, president of the Mount Washington Valley Trails Association, a 501c3 non-profit dedicated to the development of multi-use trails in the Mount Washington Valley of New Hampshire. Our organization is leading the effort to develop a multi-use path for recreation and non-motorized transportation along the Mountain Division Rail Corridor in New Hampshire, with the goal of connecting to Maine's Mountain Division pathway to create a true interstate mountain to sea multi-use path.

Multi-use paths produce some of the best returns on investment for infrastructure projects, especially in rural areas where connectivity, health, and economic issues are prevalent. These pathways promote community connections across geographically disparate communities; encourage health and provide an outlet for exercise in communities of substantial need; and catalyze economic development by creating tourism magnets. As shown by Maine's efforts to date, even the development and upkeep of rural pathways creates and sustains community. In short, and based upon anecdotal evidence across New England and the country, multi-use paths are one of the best currently available tools for positive change across rural communities, and involve the largest and most diverse cross-section of community members.

Maine's continued efforts to best use the Mountain Division corridor for a multi-use pathway have been a helpful model for our efforts, and we applaud the great work of Maine's pathway advocates and elected officials to ensure this Project becomes a reality. We look forward to the day when we can stand at the Maine/New Hampshire border and cut the ribbon connecting these projects and communities!