

REC'D DEC 07 2006

Wednesday, November 29, 2006

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a landowner in East Calais, Vermont.... a native Vermonter who has relocated due to employment to Massachusetts, and my family owns property in Peacham, East Calais, and St. Johnsbury. I am also a long time train buff.

Regarding the use of the railbed from Swanton to St. Johnsbury, I do have some very decided feelings on the issue. I would have liked to see rail stay in place, but that has never been a terribly profitable venture on this twisty and turny pathway across Vermont. Never having traveled along the route on a tourist train, I would dearly love to see the line from end to end on a bicycle or on foot. The possibility of a 96 mile recreation trail spanning the state is exciting. Rail-trails in other states have attracted great numbers of users and have in nearly all cases improved the environment (natural environment, social environment, safety) rather than leading to any serious problems. This rail-trail has the potential to be one of the biggest, best, and most picturesque trails in the nation, given full completion. It would be a jewel in the crown of this fine state - in what already is a superb state for beauty, recreation opportunities, outdoor pursuits, and tourism.

It seems that snowmobilers would need to be involved in the process, simply because of their numbers and the need for these folks to have good, safe, well maintained trails. I urge snowmobile use in the winter, and non-motorized use in the spring, summer and fall, including walking, jogging, rollerblading, bicycling, and perhaps horseback riding. Such a multi-use path would seem to present a host of benefits to the State, especially given Vermont's skill at marketing and promoting the many fine qualities of the state.

Thank you for considering public opinion and soliciting responses on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Ellis  
17 Lorraine Road  
Westwood, MA 02090