

## **Comment in Support of Peabody West Integrated Resource Project**

In June of 2020, Gorham was one of ten communities nationwide to be selected for an EPA Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Technical Assistance Grant. In September, 2020 a Community Workshop was held to create a Community Action Plan. Four goals were developed with the first being as follows:

### **Goal 1 – Sustainably develop and create connectivity between Gorham’s Androscoggin riverfront, Main Street, and surrounding forests.**

- *Action 1.1: Identify locations and information to add wayfinding and signage in Gorham that include trailhead parking and improved services.*
- *Action 1.2: Reestablish a formal stakeholder work group, that connects business partners with USFS WMNF reps to establish a trail connecting the Glen House, Dolly Copp Campground & existing Coos Trails/Town of Gorham trails.*
- *Action 1.3: Secure cooperation of existing property owners in crossing alternatives over the Androscoggin.*

The Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, Planning Board, Gorham Economic Development Team, and RERC Steering Committee all wholeheartedly support the Peabody West Integrated Resource Project. This project would expand the recreation opportunities available in and around the Town of Gorham by expanding our multi-use trail system, improving access to glade skiing, providing mountain bike opportunities, and connecting our village to Barnes Field and Dolly Copp Campground. We would like to see this trail continued beyond Dolly Copp Campground to the Glen House Hotel. This project will help to establish Gorham as a major, year-round recreation destination. The economic impact to Gorham’s recreation economy will be a huge benefit as it will help us to retain our existing amenities and will also attract new recreation-based entrepreneurs and businesses, creating a vibrant community and additional jobs. In addition, residents and tourists alike will have increased opportunities to walk, cross-country ski, hike, glade ski, mountain bike and to enjoy all the natural resources available in the WMNF and Gorham!

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important project.

*Denise M. Vallee*

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Town Manager