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Comments: Thoughts in general concerning:
CHITTENDEN BROOK HUT: From the beginning this has seemed more of a plan for marketing the National Forest to a select group of people. Having lived near GMNF for 50 years, my neighbors, local hunters and friends have expressed concerns that this project is for the few not the general public. I was surprised that there was still time to comment on this, having already read in local media the hut was already built and in place. If this is to be a test project and there will be an evaluation of this project before more huts are built then it would make sense. A ADA building may give some the ability to visit places they would not have been able to previously.
SINGLE TRACK MUTLI USE MTB TRAILS BETWEEN PITTSFIELD AND ROCHESTER: Our forests and the creatures that reside in them are all under pressure from man. what we have already done to our environment as well as the global warming that is happening. Residing near the forest I have seen a drop in the bird population over 20 years as well as a diminishment in small animals, Raccoons, Foxes, etc. also a increase in Bears that are not behaving as they have in the past. Bears not hibernating, breaking into homes and vehicles. Not to mention a explosion of bugs never seen before in Vermont. Which makes me wonder what will happen to these animals and the balance in the forest if humans fracture the dense parts of the forest that large animals require to rear their young, forage in and stay wild. One single track trail between Rochester and Pittsfield for MTB may help the local economy, and the marketing for this idea has been intense.....but what are the multi uses? Once the trail is in it will be challenged by other groups that want to use it, snowmobiles, ATV's, etc.
Many years ago a proposal was made that a highway should be built across the tops of the Green Mountains. Eventually it was put to the citizens of Vermont in a vote. It was voted down. The speed with which the current projects are moving seem to preclude a vote by the public. People in the town I live in are generally unaware of these projects including some of the town officials.
For years the local population has had a love/hate relationship with the local ski areas. In the winter one frequently hears "thank god they (Skiers,Boarders, and now Snow Bikers) only come on weekends and holidays and stay on the ski mountain, what would it would be like if they spread out"
The ski areas devote huge resources to marketing their "product" and "branding" the mountains as their own. This now appears to be happening to the GMNF with a new group of interests marketing and branding the GMNF as their place to play. Only time will tell if the forest will survive but, what will happen if this project does not work. Having seen damage to deep woods in Japan, British Columbia and along the Long Trail, mother nature is amazing but, it takes many life times to heal.