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Comments: The four trail segments proposed by the EDRD are critical to improving the usefulness, connectivity, enjoyment, and sustainability of the existing Poverty Creek Trails System, the existing Gateway Park/Trail, and the proposed Town of Blacksburg Brush Mountain Property #2 trail system; therefore, I highly endorse and approve of the construction/reconstruction of these four trail segments.

The Gateway Trail first became available for public use in the early 2000s (~2003) and since then has experienced increased use by hikers, mountain bikers, and occasional equestrians. The Gateway Trail was not purposefully constructed; rather, it was an existing way adopted by the community. For at least the last 15 years, the Gateway Trail has been used to access the existing Poverty Creek Trails System as a singular, bi-directional route where user conflict often occurs.

The addition of two, purpose-built, connector trails (trails #2 and #3) located along the Gateway trail at approximately 1/3 and 2/3 of way up Brush Mountain will help to disperse recreators to other portions of the National Forest and to Brush Mountain Property #2. With the addition of approximately 5-6 miles of trail proposed for Brush Mountain Property #2, users will have the opportunity to make loops or other permutations offered by a multitude of trails instead of just the traditional "out and back" offered by the existing Gateway trail. Users will have the opportunity to create the user experience they desire.

The adoption/reconstruction of trail #1 will help connect trails proposed for Brush Mountain Property 2. Trail #1 is a critical linkage that is an obvious helpful addition to the proposed trail system on Brush Mountain Property #2.

The addition of the trail segment #4 proposed for reconstruction and construction will create an additional short loop allowing users to leave and re-enter the Gateway Park at different locations, will promote the use of the gazebo structure at Gateway Park, and will open up access to wooded portions of Gateway Park that may be more developed for use in the future.

The addition of the four proposed trail segments will be a great benefit to the current and future population of outdoor recreators in the New River Valley. Thank you for making this project happen.