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First name: Randy

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Organization: First Stop Board Barn

Title: Brand Director

Comments: To whom it may concern:

I'm writing in support of the U.S. Forest Services' proposal to provide sustainable recreation opportunities within the Telephone Gap IRP area. In particular, I support the 34.9 miles of trail construction, relocation, and designation managed for mountain biking, hiking, and cross-country skiing, projects that will provide critical trail connectivity for various user groups, including those on the Velomont Trail and Catamount Trail. I also support the addition of 3.1 miles of existing Long Trail to the National Forest Trail System at the pending South Pond acquisition.

Additionally, I support the Vermont Huts Association's application for a special use permit to construct, operate, and maintain a four-season hut within the footprint of the former lodge that was destroyed by a fire near South Pond. A hut in this location takes advantage of existing infrastructure and is ideally situated to host users of the trails mentioned above, creating a new point of access to the outdoors for trail users of all ages and abilities.

Since the expansion of mountain bike, hike, and backcountry ski trails in the greater Killington area my family's business, First Stop Board Barn, has been able to convert more than 50% of our winter seasonal staff into full-time year around employees. I believe if we connect the Sherburne Trails in Killington to the Green Mountain Trails in Pittsfield the Velomont Trail will attract many new riders (both locally, regionally, and nationally) to come bike in VT.

I also believe the new Vermont Hut near South Pond could potentially increase outdoor tourism visitors as well. I've stayed at the Chittenden Brook Hut and referred many guests to use the Vermont Hut system for their next outdoor adventure. The Vermont Huts are amazing and I'd love to see the new hut at this location.

Please feel free to reach out by phone or email with any questions.

Best,

Randy Elles

Brand Director

First Stop Board Barn

www.firststopboardbarn.com