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First name: RJ

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Organization: Vermont Huts and Trails

Title: Executive Director

Comments: To: Chris Mattrick, Rochester District Ranger -

I'm writing in support of the proposed South Pond Hut Special Use Permit and Project Specific Forest Plan Amendment pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

An ADA-accessible hut in this location takes advantage of existing infrastructure and is ideally situated to host users of the Long Trail, Catamount Trail, and future Velomont Trail, creating a new point of access to the outdoors for trail users of all ages and abilities.

Using best management practices and energy efficient designs, Vermont Huts has worked successfully with Green Mountain National Forest, the State of Vermont, and numerous private landowners over the past nine years to increase access to the outdoors by creating enriching and immersive experiences for locals and visitors alike.

We have hosted guests ranging in age from six months to 82 years old. Our FOREST program - free for all participants - provides meaningful outdoor education to those who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to explore the natural world.

A South Pond Hut will benefit Vermonters and anyone who visits it, fostering a deeper appreciation for the natural environment.

Sincerely,

RJ Thompson

Executive Director

Vermont Huts & Trails