

Theresa Utton-Jerman

Subject:

Support Outdoor Recreation in the Governor's Budget

As a board member of Stowe Trails Partnership, thank you and your legislative colleagues for the much-needed economic relief in 2020 to businesses and nonprofits across the state, especially trail organizations. Financial assistance has eased the challenges due to the pandemic and will help Vermont's economy emerge positively.

The value of the outdoors has proven to help Vermonters and our communities during this time of uncertainty. Trails and outdoor recreation have provided critical mental and physical health benefits as people flocked to trails to lift their spirits, clear their minds, and fortify their bodies during the isolating pandemic. For example, the Green Mountain Club reported that the average daily use count on the Long Trail was up 35% last season and overnight shelter use up 80%. And Stowe Trails Partnership saw increased demand throughout our trail network, up 31% from 2019.

That is why I am pleased to hear about the Governor's proposed investments in outdoor recreation infrastructure in the 2022 state budget. I wholeheartedly agree that supporting our state's outdoor recreation assets and trail networks on public and private land in ways that foster stewardship and expand participation and access will reinforce a prosperous outdoor recreation economy and thriving communities and surrounding environment for the future.

Therefore, I hope you will support the \$5 million expansion to the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative Community Grant program, the \$5 million for recreational infrastructure construction on public lands and to recreation nonprofit organizations for private lands, and the over \$10 million capital appropriation for maintenance and cabins in our State Parks.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to further discuss my support for these outdoor recreation proposals or assist your legislative deliberations in any way.

Sincerely,

Cyril Brunner