



Upper Valley Trails Alliance

P.O. Box 1215, Norwich, VT 05055 Phone: 802.649.9075 www.uvtrails.org

February 1, 2013

Re: Wilder Project No. 1892-026

Since 1999, when the Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA) formed to advocate for an improved network of trails in the Upper Valley, individuals, groups, and towns have seen Wilder Dam as an opportunity for improved connectivity in this Connecticut River Valley region of VT and NH. In recent years we've heard that the Department of Homeland Security has restrictions on potential use of the Wilder Dam as a pedestrian crossing due to security concerns associated with the hydro-electric turbine system. Using the top of the dam with the addition of appropriate security measures however appears to be the perfect means for pedestrian travel.

UVTA's constituents continue to ask us to seek options to improve connectivity across the Connecticut River for various reasons ranging from enhanced recreational opportunities between Kilowatt Park (VT) and the Boston Lot (NH), to reduced bike or walk commute time to work locations on both sides of the river. Having a path across the dam (or on a suspension bridge upstream of the dam if that resolves the security concerns) would even reduce some local vehicle traffic and their carbon emissions as more people would have a reduced commute distance and be more willing to leave their cars at home.

In 2008 and 2010 the Upper Valley Trails Alliance hosted public forums to learn of community values associated with trails and to develop an action plan towards improving the Upper Valley Trails Network. Over 100 participants attended the initial planning forum and over 50 attended the plan updating session at the second forum. These "Trails Connect" forums identified several considerations for an improved trails network, including: improved connectivity between towns; improved river access and more riverside trails; and in the 2010 forum participants specifically identified Wilder Dam as a valuable crossing point for improved trail infra-structure. The links below describe the interest in and value of this crossing point: in particular see trails connect 2 report included as link within our BLOG article "trails-connect-2-filling-in-the-gaps/".

Thank you for considering the value of Wilder Dam as a crossing point for pedestrian (including bicycle) travel in this re-licensing process.

Sincerely,

John Taylor
Trails Program Director

(802) 649-9075

Resources:

<http://uvtrails.wordpress.com/2010/07/13/trails-connect-2-filling-in-the-gaps/>

<http://uvtrails.wordpress.com/2010/03/18/river-park-works-towards-smart-growth-development/>

<http://uvtrails.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/microsoft-word-october-15th-upper-valley-bikepedtrailtour-notes.pdf>

<http://uvtrails.wordpress.com/2009/07/10/take-to-the-loop-trail/>

<http://uvtrails.wordpress.com/2009/04/25/boat-fairy-or-over-dam-travel/>

<http://uvtrails.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/microsoft-word-october-15th-upper-valley-bikepedtrailtour-notes.pdf>

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