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As many of you know, Brookfield closed the walking trail on the southern side of the river, when that had been a mainstay in the community for years. Brookfield made the decision to close the trail, saying it was no longer safe, but refused to maintain the trail for safety using their own money. Two local efforts were made to write grants to obtain the money to fix the safety issues on the trail, and both proposals were denied. The grants were not successful because Brookfield only obtained one cost estimate for repairs, and federal grants require several cost estimates.

The opening of this trail is crucial for the citizens of our town for recreation, and the draw of tourists to see Rumford Falls, one of the largest waterfalls in the east. FERC requires hydro projects to create recreational plans around dams so citizens can utilize the property and the public benefits from the commercial hydro operation. Currently Brookfield is not following the past license plan, and there are concerns they do not see the trail as important for the town and their relicensing plan. Brookfield has a history in the United States of severely limiting access to their facilities due to fears of litigation.

In addition to the trail, citizens used to be able to access the property on the north side of the river which has amazing architecture and views of the falls and the reflection pool. This was a picnic area and a place to relax and walk near the river. This access has also been closed by Brookfield, and should be open to the public.

The Androscoggin is not the river it used to be. It is cleaner and very beautiful. It is becoming a place to boat and fish. There is rumor that huge trout live in the reflection pool, and Maine Fish and Wildlife is considering how to improve the fishery. Brookfield is reluctant to do the fishery studies Maine Fish and Wildlife requests, and they need to be required to do so.

Document Content(s)

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