

Curtis Rice, Rumford, ME.

I write to beg that FERC require Brookfield to stop blocking access to the trails around the Rumford Falls. For at least 10 years prior to the fencing, I had enjoyed almost daily walks through this trail. When visitors came to visit us in Rumford, I would encourage them to join me on walks around this hidden gem. People who were sometimes dismissive of the Rumford area left with a different impression of the livability and beauty which surrounds us.

I well remember the distress and disappointment I experienced when it was first blocked off. Then, it was posted as a temporary measure due to a rock fall. Later, it would become apparent that this had been a disingenuous first step to cutting off all access and privatizing what had been a well-used and public right of way.

Prior to the cut-off, I would often take my two oldest children on walks behind the falls. This amazing trail started no less than 5 minutes by foot from our home and was a great source of daily physical exercise and mental health maintenance. It was great for bonding and sharing nature. My last two children have never been able to take these walks with me. This is a very real tragedy, I believe, and I can only guess how many others have missed out on this valuable family time.

The amazing experience of being able to be up right next to the falls, especially during the dramatic spring melt, should continue to be available to everyone in the area. The same experience at a distance of several hundred yards is truly a pathetically poor substitute.

Although Brookfield may have some financial or other benefit that would come from denying the citizens recreational access, the benefit lost to the people and economy of the area would be far greater. The thought of it should be disturbing. If the current situation is allowed to continue, it would stand as a symbol of government power being used to protect corporate interests over the long term rights of local citizens. If you rule in favor of community access, it would reinforce the idea that government works for the good of the people of this area and is not just a rubber stamp for bottom-line corporate greed.

Please help us and the future of our community by keeping this access open.

Curtis Rice
Rumford, Maine

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