

## State To Restrict Skier Access to Big Jay - Action comes in response to illegal trail cut

Contributed by The Editors  
Thursday, 20 December 2007

WATERBURY, Vt. – The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, in cooperation with The Green Mountain Club, Jay Peak Ski Resort, and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board will be restricting winter access to Big Jay from the Jay Peak Ski Area for the 2007-2008 ski season. This action comes in response to an illegal ski trail that was cut on Big Jay this summer.

Officials will be holding a public meeting at Jay Peak Resort on Saturday, Dec. 15, at 4:30 p.m., to explain this action and to answer questions from the public. The meeting will be held in the “Stateside Base Lodge” building at Jay Peak Resort.

Big Jay is the highest peak in the Green Mountains without a maintained trail system. This property was acquired in 1993 by the State with the assistance of The Green Mountain Club and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to protect the Long Trail and important natural habitat. Big Jay is part of Jay State Forest and is a popular location for backcountry skiing. Though adjacent to the Jay Peak Ski Area, Big Jay is not within and is not serviced by the ski area.

In July of this year, the Green Mountain Club received a call from a tram operator at Jay Peak Ski Area, who reported that a large swath of trees had apparently been cut at Big Jay.

In following up on this report, it was determined the illegal ski trail was more than 2,000 feet long and up to 60 feet wide and that nearly 1,000 trees had been cut. The alleged perpetrators have subsequently been arrested for the trail-cutting and are currently awaiting trial.

“While we have been concerned about some light cutting in the past by backcountry skiers and riders at Big Jay, this new cut goes way beyond that and poses significant environmental and safety concerns,” says Jonathan Wood, Commissioner of the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. “We feel it is necessary to keep people off the illegally cut trail, for their own safety as well as to allow for restoration to occur.”

While skiers and riders will not be permitted on the illegal trail and will not be allowed to access Big Jay directly from Jay Peak Resort, backcountry enthusiasts can still skin in or snowshoe up into Big Jay from Route 242 and ski or ride down. However, the cutting of any vegetation in this area whatsoever will not be permitted and will be strictly enforced.

Saturday’s meeting at Jay Peak Resort will provide an opportunity for the public to hear more about this issue. Questions or comments can be directed to State Lands Director Mike Fraysier, VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, 103 South Main St., Waterbury, VT 05671; phone: (802) 241-3682, email: [mike.fraysier@state.vt.us](mailto:mike.fraysier@state.vt.us).