

# north shore news

## LETTER: Trail use master plan a must

North Shore News

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**Dear Editor:**

In 2010 I was hired by the District of North Vancouver to help implement recommendations from the Fromme Classification Study (2008) with funding from federal grant money (under the Recreational Infrastructure Canada program).

As an experienced trail builder and foreman, I led a carefully selected trail crew to bring Fromme up to a higher standard.

We installed new signage, rerouted trails, decommissioned unsafe and unsustainable trails, constructed bridges and did plenty of GIS (geographic information system) mapping.

Some of the other projects I worked on included developing maintenance and inspection plans, improved trail standards for construction and maintenance, search and rescue strategies and prevention.

These were intended to form the basis of a master plan for the mountain. There was great emphasis on environmental impact, mitigating user conflict and risk management.

For two years we worked hard and achieved a lot. But we were not able to implement all of the recommendations from the Fromme Study. We did, however, exceed expectations within the DNV and within the mountain biking community.

Unfortunately, as soon as the grant money ran out we were all terminated. We were also informed the DNV had no intentions of continuing the project. Much of my work was shelved and abandoned.

I'm not entirely sure why, but I might guess that district staff did not understand how or why to continue forward with it.

Where we left off, the North Shore Mountain Bike Association took over and ran with it.

Since then they have continued on to do some great work. However, I believe that a self-policing, volunteer organization is a conflict of interest and may not be the best and only way to manage a vast network of trails that caters to other user groups such as hikers, dog walkers and equestrian.

The NSMBA needs a place and voice as mountain bikers are the majority of trail users. But letting one user group take over and letting them have free reign of the mountain isn't good land management practice.

Now it's 2015 and the DNV seems to be still unsure on how to manage this great recreational destination area. I am hopeful the DNV will find its way and realize that maintaining a vast network of trails isn't a one-shot deal. It's an ongoing commitment and huge responsibility.

I truly believe that developing a master plan is the most important and first step in continuing forward.

**Owen Thomas**  
**North Vancouver**

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