

## Duo entering hall of fame

### Trail blazing trail builders honoured for contributions to North Shore mountain biking community

Erin McPhee / North Shore News

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"Dangerous" Dan Cowan and Todd "Digger" Fiander watch a mountain biker zip by on North Vancouver's Bobsled trail. The two men were recently inducted into the Marin Museum of Bicycling's Mountain Bike Hall of Fame. photo Mike Wakefield, North Shore News

Two local men were recently inducted into the Mountain Bike Hall of Fame in honour of their extensive contributions to the building of local trails on the North Shore going back to the 1980s.

North Vancouver's Todd "Digger" Fiander, 56, and Bowen Island's "Dangerous" Dan Cowan, 44, were honoured by the Marin Museum of Bicycling, a bicycle history museum and cultural centre located in Fairfax, Calif. The non-profit, educational and volunteer-run facility is the new home of the Mountain Bike Hall of Fame, which was founded in 1988 in Crested Butte, Colo., according to its website, [mmbhof.org](http://mmbhof.org) (<http://mmbhof.org>).

"It's nice to get a formal recognition. Digger and I both, we've had recognition, but it's informal recognition. That recognition really only comes from the hardcores who have been around and know the scene. It's nice because there has been countless, literally thousands of hours out there... For most people it's hard to fathom how much time was put in," says Cowan.

The hall of fame credits the duo with building more than 35 North Shore trails, encompassing approximately 55 kilometres.

Fiander started to build trails in the 1980s. He laughs when he recalls the early days.

"I had friends when I started mountain biking and told them that they should get one of these bikes and come up on the mountain, they said, 'Aw, it's a fad. It'll never take off.' They're laughing (now) too because they're riding the trails and having fun and that's all it's about," he says.

In addition to trail building, Fiander produced and filmed a number of well-known North Shore Extreme videos from

1997 to 2010. The films not only showcased his and Cowan's hard work, but also a variety of local freeriders, Cowan for one, and Wade Simmons, who the duo is grateful to for nominating them for the hall of fame.

"It's a great honour and I'd like to thank all the people out here for riding and using the trails," says Fiander.

The longtime friends were inducted into the Mountain Bike Hall of Fame together.

"We've got a great relationship. . . . I look up to him and I think he thinks quite highly of me, the same way I do of him. We have mutual admiration," says Cowan.

Cowan came on the local mountain biking scene a little later than Fiander, doing most of his trail building work in the 1990s and early-2000s.

He recalls riding Fiander's trails, his favourites, long before actually meeting him.

When the pair did eventually meet, they became fast friends.

"We really thought about mountain biking in a whole different way than people had been thinking about mountain biking around the world," says Cowan.

The fact that the North Shore became famous for mountain biking was due partly to the natural topography of the land, says Cowan. "The environment basically produced Digger and I," he says. However it took people like them, armed with the motivation, enthusiasm and drive to truly put it on the map.

"Before it was just the chosen few who would be riding up there. Now we have, on one of the trails, Espresso, 3,000 people a month riding it," says Fiander.

Fiander also helped co-found the North Shore Mountain Bike Association in 1994 and remains actively involved in the organization, a voice for the local mountain biking community that works to protect and maintain local trails, and focuses on sustainability. Fiander currently serves as trail director and invites community members to the association's upcoming fall trail days. For more information, visit [nsmba.ca](http://nsmba.ca) (<http://nsmba.ca>).

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