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## North Vancouver trail saboteur pleads guilty to mischief on Fromme

Jane Seyd / North Shore News

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Lower Skull trail. file photo Mike Wakefield, North Shore News

A Crown prosecutor says he'll be seeking a term of house arrest for a 64-year-old North Vancouver woman who has admitted to deliberately laying obstacles across a North Vancouver mountain biking trail.

Crown counsel Mark Myhre said he'll be seeking a conditional sentence order for Tineke (Tina) Kraal after Kraal pleaded guilty in North Vancouver provincial court Friday to mischief in the case.

Under a deal between Crown and defence lawyers, Kraal has pleaded guilty to mischief that "renders property dangerous" for her actions in sabotaging the mountain bike trail on Fromme Mountain between Jan. 5, 2013 and Jan. 4, 2015, but will not face a more serious charge of mischief likely to cause danger to life.

Myhre said outside court the agreed statement of facts entered in the case include an acknowledgement that "someone could have been seriously hurt."

Myhre added, "The main thing the Crown wants to get out through her sentencing is that what she did is a crime. It's dangerous. And if you do it, we'll try to hold you accountable."

The Upper Lynn Valley resident is accused of repeatedly laying branches, logs and sticks across steep sections of the Lower Skull and Quarry Court trails on Mount Fromme.

The case came to light at the beginning of this year after two mountain bikers placed hidden cameras in the trees, allegedly capturing Kraal's actions on surveillance.

Kraal was arrested at 5 a.m. on Jan. 4 as she exited a trailhead.

Kraal's plea Friday came after an unusual application by Myhre, essentially asking provincial court Judge John Milne to take a hike with lawyers on the Skull trail on Mount Fromme.

Myhre told the judge going to the mountain would be the only way to really get a sense of how steep and dangerous the mountain biking trail is.

Shaun Rivers, one of the North Shore mountain bikers who made the videos of Kraal, testified about the Skull trail in court on Friday, telling the judge it's "the steepest of all sanctioned mountain bike trails in North Vancouver."

The steep trail has a lot of "rock and unforgiving terrain," he said.

As part of the hearing, the judge was shown a video Rivers made with a camera mounted on his bike, riding down the Skull trail.

A North Vancouver RCMP officer who investigated the case also testified, telling the judge when he went up to the trail in the days before Kraal was arrested, "I realized the angles on the hills were far more steep than I expected."

Myhre told the judge the case is unusual in that the scene of the crime is so closely tied to the offence itself.

But that wasn't enough to convince Milne to take a hike up the mountain.

Milne said the mountain bike video was graphic enough, showing "boulders, outcrops, narrow pathways through very large trees and trees within inches of the handlebars."

He added it wouldn't be a prudent use of court resources to spend half a day hiking a trail.

Kraal's lawyer Martin Peters indicated he will seek a conditional discharge for his client.

Kraal - who was accompanied by her husband and by North Shore trail activist Monica Craver - declined to comment on her plea.

Outside the court, Peters said Kraal has already been "tried in the court of public opinion."

"She and her husband have been mercilessly harassed, not only by the press but through social media," he said, adding, "Some of the comments on social media are by people who are very, very angry."

Peters said Kraal and her husband were so concerned they installed an alarm system in their home. "These people have been hounded," he said.

A date for Kraal's sentencing hearing has not yet been set.

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