

## Cyclists clash with walkers on eco trail in Stanley Park

### Regular park users call for better protection of sensitive areas

BY KEVIN GRIFFIN, VANCOUVER SUN AUGUST 20, 2014



Alison Martin stands beside one of the signs clearly banning bikes from the environmentally-sensitive Ravine Trail in Stanley Park.

Photograph by: Mark van Manen, PNG

VANCOUVER -- Stanley Park needs to protect environmentally-sensitive areas from cyclists, says a West End resident who witnessed a group cycling in a prohibited area.

Alison Martin said she and her husband Leif Oddson were walking on Ravine Trail, which runs under Pipeline Road between Beaver Lake and the seawall, on Sunday around 3 p.m. when the incident occurred.

Martin said they were passed by about 25 cyclists despite the fact that there are bike gates and signs saying bikes are prohibited at both ends of the environmentally-sensitive trail.

"My husband said nicely, 'This is a no-cycling-trail, it's posted.' The guy said something like, 'We don't care' or 'I know.' The third cyclist basically told us to take a hike," Martin said.

Oddson informed every cyclist that passed that it wasn't a cycling trail and that the ravine is an environmentally-protected area but "they just kept ignoring us", Martin said.

The trail is protected because it is a riparian area with a high diversity of plant species, and is used extensively by park wildlife.

Martin said as the group passed she called 311 — the city's non-emergency phone number in Vancouver to find out information and connect with the right department to make a complaint.

"It was so shocking to see," she said.

Daria Wojnarski, a Vancouver park board official, said park rangers responded to Martin's call.

"It is now on their priority list to monitor the area," she said.

Trouble with cyclists is nothing new in the park, in July a collision between a pedestrian visitor and a cyclist on the seawall sent the 43-year-old tourist to hospital with three broken vertebrae, a broken knee and a broken toe.

Wojnarski said the board doesn't keep statistics on the number of conflicts between cyclists and

pedestrians on either the seawall or trails in the park.

A West End resident for 14 years, Martin said she and her husband walk Ravine Trail and around Lost Lagoon almost every weekend in spring, summer and fall and that they regularly see bikes on both trails.

"I think there needs to be better policing of these eco trails. I think there needs to be cameras. I think there needs to be big, big signs saying 'We will fine you. What you're doing is illegal.'"

Constance Barnes, park board vice chair, said what happened to Martin and her husband is unacceptable.

"I'm angry," said Barnes. "... I'm a cyclist. I'm angry that this has happened. It's incredibly disrespectful."

But Barnes said she didn't have an answer to deal with the problem.

"We need to figure out what we can do better," she said. "We will follow it up."

Robyn Worcester, conservation programs manager, Stanley Park Ecology Society, said while she's noticed a big increase in the number of cyclists in the park this summer, she said it was "unusual" to see a group on Ravine Trail.

She said she had seen large groups of cyclists in the park but they walked their bikes in areas where riding is prohibited.

While Ravine Trail is already clearly marked as off limits to cyclists, other areas need better signs, Worcester said.

"There are still lots of bikes on trails that aren't designed as bike trails," she said.

"Partly that's because there isn't very good signage. I've seen even maps created by tour companies that show all the trails are the same. There is a problem with a lack of awareness among tourists. There are also residents who do use the park with their bike — they don't care which trails are cycling and which are not. And there are cyclists who respect the rules."

Worcester did caution members of the public about informing others in the park about trail rules.

"When members of the public tell other members of the public what to do in the park, that often results in conflict," she said.

Worcester said she would like to see better protection on the North Creek Trail, which follows the inflow into Beaver Lake; Ravine Trail is along the lake's outflow.

"I'd like to see gates on North Creek trail which is heavily impacted by cyclists because it is one of the steeper areas of the park," she said.

"I see mountain bikers going down there. We've found increasing erosion. It's a really valuable little stream that's rare."

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<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Stanley-Park-trails-map.pdf>

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