

Subject: RE: FW: mountain bike use

Date: Sat, 26 Feb 2005 10:43:41 -0800

From: "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>

To: "Elizabeth James" <cagebc@yahoo.com>, <fonvca@fonvca.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>, "Susan Rogers" <Susan_Rogers@dnv.org>, "Richard Boulton" <Richard_Boulton@dnv.org>

CC: "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>

Dear Ms James;

Thank for your excellent analysis of the situation. I believe you are absolutely correct, the public opinion tide is turning. Biking on hard mountain roads is one thing, biking on steep, forested and rain drenched hillsides is something totally different. Nobody has ever objected to the first. As for the second, it cannot be characterised as anything else than a manifestation of latter-day environmental barbarism.

Yours truly,

Ernie Crist

From: Elizabeth James [<mailto:cagebc@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Saturday, February 26, 2005 8:21 AM

To: Ernie Crist; fonvca@fonvca.org; Senior Management Committee; Susan Rogers; Richard Boulton

Subject: Re: FW: mountain bike use

26 February 2005

Dear Clr. Crist:

At last, we have heard from a member of one of the more scientifically-aware and reasonable groups in the environmental movement.

Writer Mary Ann Webster of the Sierra Club underwrites the vital importance of performing due diligence on North Shore mountain trails - before rather than after they are damaged beyond rehabilitation. That's all you asked for, am I right?

In addition to my previous emails on this subject, I realize that I have only briefly touched on the fact that I have often regretted the fact that I did not ever have the privilege of learning to ride a bicycle. It is a great way to get exercise and see the world. I do not begrudge those young people their sport, or places to indulge it. I have grand-daughters who love to ride and who may well grow into the sport.

Nevertheless, I have enjoyed hiking these hillsides, leaving only a soft footprint that disappeared with the next rainfall. Over the years, I have been known to sit for hours awaiting the privilege of a chipmunk running up to my shoulder to pick up a nut, to enjoy the magic stillness of mist rising off a Cariboo lake and, on the North Shore, the sight of a bear - in its natural habitat - wandering above the Baden Powell trail.

At no time, did I ever, ever feel I had personal right to usurp use of those environments, those trails. I never even thought of building alien structures on public land; nor do I believe that, once built, maintaining those structures or cleaning up the trails should entitle anyone to continued illegal use of public land.

The District of North Vancouver needs to look at its unfortunate developing history: It has allowed continued development into and above

the treeline. That development, for the benefit of the few who could afford it, is responsible, in part, for today's bear problems. It allowed the Capilano Suspension Bridge to get off scot-free when the company illegally built a massive canopy structure - after ten warning letters from Staff who were trying to do their job well. That company also whined to Council that the canopy was a valuable contribution to tourism and to "the economy."

Now, Council is in danger of allowing the problems created by mountain-bikes to get out of hand. I can understand how the issue crept up on us imperceptibly before most became aware of the problems lurking in the wings and there is always a time for appeasement and diplomacy. What takes real courage, though, is that there is also a time to draw a line in the sand and assert one's authority. In particular, I expect Mayor Harris - a self-designated champion of the environment and all things riparian - to show leadership on this matter for the benefit of the community or communities at large.

Today is the time for Council to take a firm stand and to insist on a moratorium on the sport of mountain-biking in the District, to allow time for Mr. Ridge and his Staff to conduct the studies he recommended and to insist that the GVRD take up its responsibility to assign areas of the region to the sport.

For those who have taken up the cry, "It's the economy, stupid," I would point out that the economy also benefits mightily when the beauty of our pristine environment can be enjoyed by all those - citizens and tourists alike - who soak up that beauty while treading softly upon it.

Thank you, Sierra Club, for speaking up at last - for too long your voice has been the sound of one-hand clapping in this Region.

Sincerely,
Liz James
[604] 988-2066

Ernie Crist <ernie_crist@dnv.org> wrote:

From: JASMIN1931@aol.com [<mailto:JASMIN1931@aol.com>]
Sent: Friday, February 25, 2005 6:14 PM
To: Janice_Harris@dnv.org---Mayor Angila_Bains@dnv.org; Mayor and Council - DNV
Subject: mountain bike use

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February 25, 2005

Re: Mountain bikes on the North shore (BC)

Dear Mayor and Council,

Here in Southern California, the issue of multi-use on trails has been an ongoing problem for the past fifteen years. I am chair of the Santa Monica Mountains Task Force of the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club recognizes that mountain biking can be a legitimate activity on single-track trails; however, before any trail is open to bike use, it has to be evaluated for safety, standards of grade and sight lines, potential conflicts with other users, and environmental impacts. Only then, should the trail be opened to mountain bikes. There are many, many trails in our mountains that are closed to bikes because they threaten the safety and enjoyment of other users and are too narrow, steep or

otherwise unsuitable for multi-use. Bikes definitely impact trails and cause erosion and threats to habitat. Bike use should, in most cases, be limited to wide dirt roads or pavement.

The American Hiking Society, a prestigious organization which originally supported mountain bike use on narrow trails, has drastically changed their position and no longer supports multi-use on narrow paths because of the impact on the environment, the safety aspect for all users, and the infringement on the enjoyment by other users.

We recommend that your trails be closed to mountain bikes, unless all of the above criteria are satisfied.

Most cordially,
Mary Ann Webster, Chair
Santa Monica Mountains Task Force, Sierra Club
phone: 310 559 3126. fax: 310 559 3136

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