

**Subject: FW: Mountain Bikes on Trails**

**Date:** Sat, 26 Feb 2005 21:19:42 -0800

**From:** "Ernie Crist" <ernie\_crist@dnv.org>

**To:** "James Ridge" <James\_Ridge@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>, "Richard Boulton" <Richard\_Boulton@dnv.org>, "Susan Rogers" <Susan\_Rogers@dnv.org>

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From: ruth@gotorec.org [<mailto:ruth@gotorec.org>]

Sent: Saturday, February 26, 2005 8:25 PM

To: Janice\_Harris@dnv.org -Mayor; Angila Bains; Mayor and Council - DNV

Subject: Mountain Bikes on Trails

North Vancouver District Council

Dear Mayor and City Council -

With trail preservation, trail access and public safety for trail users a foremost consideration, it is not in the best interests of other trail users and of the land to allow mountain bikes on the trails historically used by others. Various conservation groups have similar concerns relative to preserving trails for use and enjoyment.

For over 15 years the bikers have lobbied heavily for trail access everywhere. They have been successful in many places, and have been unsuccessful in others. In their headquarter city of Boulder, Colorado they are kept off the trails that hikers and horsemen use. Several years ago they lost a lawsuit for extensive trail access in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area near San Francisco.

The main problem is that when bikers are on trails, other trail users are intimidated by their speed and, fearing for their safety, stop using those trails. The quiet enjoyment of trails is further disturbed as bikers aggressively and dangerously careen down the trails. By default, then, the multi-use trails become mainly biker trails. Not all bikers are irresponsible, but the majority are on the trail for the adrenaline high they enjoy with the speed, not caring about crashing. In fact, crashing is part of the 'high' from the trail experience. Who will patrol the multi-use trails? Will they just give a warning or can they give a citation? Who will re-build the trails from the damage?

Another consideration is that when you open the trail to a wheeled vehicle, where do you draw the line? There are several other versions of recreational wheels (the mountain board, the trail inline skates, and the "diggler", a motor powered combination of a skateboard and a scooter), and they will all want equal access. Many of these vehicles are designed to cross over rocks, roots, dirt, water, and the usual obstacles of a trail, without considering the possible damage.

Mountain Bikers definitely have a place as a recreational user, but they need to recreate in appropriate areas with other off-road vehicles. Their speed makes them incompatible with other trail users.

In many parts of the U.S. where shared trails have been the policy, now there is a strong movement for closing those trails to bikes due to extreme user conflicts, ecological damage, and abandonment of use by the traditional trail users - hikers and equestrians.

Sincerely,

Ruth Gerson

President  
Recreation and Equestrian Coalition

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