

Subject: [Fwd: Mt. Fromme Issue]

Date: Sun, 06 Feb 2005 20:27:02 -0800

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: Mt. Fromme Issue

Date: Sat, 05 Feb 2005 14:27:11 -0800

From: Cam Birtwell <birtwell@uvic.ca>

To: anixon@dnv.org, dnvCouncil@dnv.org, ecrist@dnv.org, fonvca@fonvca.org, jcuthbert@dnv.org, jharris@dnv.org, lmuri@dnv.org, mmckeeonholmes@dnv.org, rwalton@dnv.org

Please See below... I have also included this letter as a Microsoft Word Attachment for your convenience.

February 5, 2005

Dear Mayor and Councilors,

I am writing to you in regards to the issue surrounding mountain biking on Mt. Fromme. I am not writing to argue that trail builders should have unlimited license, or that mountain biking has no environmental impact, or that there is no such thing as a trail user conflict. I think that we all understand that these issues exist. The important thing is to recognize that the mountain biking and trail building community as a whole is willing to work with you and move forward in a positive direction. I feel that a delicate balance exists right now - we (the mountain biking community) understand the need to work through due process, but we are also becoming increasingly frustrated with how our input is being considered and the ultimate direction that the Mt. Fromme issue is heading.

Up until just recently, I had always lived close to a forested area, be it the UBC Endowment Lands (now Pacific Spirit Park) or the slopes of Mt Seymour. >From my earliest years I remember going for Sunday walks (rain or shine!) and marveling at every discovery along the wooded paths. As I grew up, I found the forest to be a place of recreation (walking the dog, running, biking), and also a place for relaxation and rejuvenation. I believe that most users of Mt. Fromme share these same sentiments and that they only differ in the way that they explore their surroundings.

I now reside in Victoria, where government and user groups have found a common ground in nearby Mt. Work, which has been designated as a public recreation ground catering to mountain biking and hiking. "The Dump" as it is affectionately known, is a popular destination on both weekdays and weekends, with young and old recreation enthusiasts converging upon a diverse and well-designed trail system. There is no user fee, yet there is a designated parking lot, bathrooms, and bike wash station. The trails are (well) maintained by the same people who use them, with regular trail maintenance days organized by the South Island Mountain Bike Society (SIMBS) in addition to individual efforts. In North Vancouver, you have the opportunity to set up a similar situation with an equally responsible and effective organization, namely the North Shore Mountain Bike Association (NSMBA), whose volunteer efforts have been largely responsible for the excellent maintenance of the trail system in North Vancouver thus far.

In addition to adding an "outsider" perspective, my removal from North Vancouver also makes my visits back (with bike in tow!) that much more enjoyable. In one week, I will usually make the time to ride at least three times on Mt. Seymour and Mt. Fromme, with friends, family, and dog included. I know of many others who make similar trips to North Vancouver for the same purpose. The only difference is that some of these individuals and groups travel great distances, spending their money in local shops, hotels, and restaurants. I have met people from all over the world on Mt. Fromme, and there is no mistaking why they chose to visit North Vancouver.

As a Master's student in Kinesiology, I can also assure you of the physical and psychological health benefits offered by mountain biking. It is commonly understood that well over 50% of the whole Canadian population is classified as inactive *. In addition, an ever-growing proportion of youth is also being exposed to a host of potential diseases by not being physically active. I believe that every opportunity to provide your citizens with recreation activities should be pursued. Mountain biking has moved out of the "extreme" label and is a bona fide mainstream sport that offers just such a healthy recreation opportunity. Before there is the suggestion to have riding only on Seymour and Cypress, consider that Mt. Fromme is a true mountain biking experience - involving earning the exciting trip down by first getting the heart pumping on the extended trip up!

In the end, I truly do hope that the lines of communication will remain open and that you will not just listen to our suggestions, you will hear them and consider them. It would be a travesty to not have this issue resolved for the common good of all user groups, versus for the narrow views of a vociferous few.


Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Cam Birtwell

* For more information on Physical Inactivity in Canada, see:

Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. (2002) 2002 Physical Activity Monitor. <http://cflri.ca/cflri/pa/surveys/2002survey/2002survey.html>

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