

Subject: [Fwd: [Fwd: "Pandora's Box: Is the industry responsible for how consumers freeride?"]]

Date: Wed, 12 Jan 2005 14:31:52 -0800

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: [Fwd: "Pandora's Box: Is the industry responsible for how consumers freeride?"]

Date: Wed, 12 Jan 2005 10:43:15 -0800

From: M E Craver <mecraver@shaw.ca>

To: Mayor Harris <Janice_Harris@dnv.org>, Councillor Alan Nixon <anixon@dnv.org>, Councillor Ernie Crist <ecrist@dnv.org>, Councillor Jim Cuthbert <cuthberj@dnv.org>, Councillor Lisa Muri <lmuri@dnv.org>, Councillor Maureen McKeon Holmes <mmckeonholmes@dnv.org>, Councillor Richard Walton <rwalton@dnv.org>, Mayor and Council - DNV <Council@dnv.org>

CC: James Ridge <James_Ridge@dnv.org>, "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>

Dear Mayor and Councillors: The following is a complete article regarding the bicycle retail and industry. I had sent a partial story last year, and have recently acquired the whole story. It addresses some of the concerns Council has with the lack of involvement from the bike shops, etc. Just because a specific bike is built does not mean it should be allowed to be ridden that way. The concern with safety has been addressed by Whistler, yet the injuries are still consistently happening, as stated in the article. Also, the mountain bikers' own attitude -- "if you do not build it, we will do it illegally anyhow." They wish to continue to ride where ever they choose, legal or not. Who is ultimately responsible for the way mountain bikers ride? The bike manufacturers and retailers? Or the riders themselves, for buying these bikes? The new bikes have everything on them but the motor -- dual shocks, dual disc brakes, thick, knobby tires, etc. Great for the rider -- very bad for the forests. These bikes have become the West Coast "Choppers" in our natural forest and mountains.

Monica Craver

From: "Constance Berto" <c.berito@earthlink.net>

Subject: "Pandora's Box"

Date: Mon, 3 May 2004 15:58:46 -0700

"Pandora's Box: Is the industry responsible for how consumers freeride?" by Vernon Felton. Bicycle Retailer and Industry News, 15 April 2004.

A narrow singletrack splinters off a Northern California fire road and winds out of sight behind a stand of fir trees. It looks innocent enough, but beyond the trees, the trail takes on an entirely different nature. The singletrack quickly dumps onto a narrow ladder bridge. It's a rickety stunt constructed of salvaged packing crates. It climbs at a steady pace -- 3, 4, 5 feet above the ground and then, suddenly, it ends. An advanced mountain biker might find the trail thrilling, but to the less skilled, a broken collarbone probably awaits at the end of the line. To a park ranger, the illegal trail is a good excuse to close the park to mountain bikers.

This scenario is becoming familiar across the United States as freeride-style trails pop up in the least likely places--Florida, Illinois, New York, Maryland, Michigan and North Carolina. In some cases, the trails are built with land manager approval. In many cases, however, they are unauthorized and unsafe.

Some in the industry are concerned that the spread of unauthorized freeride trails could threaten trail access for all mountain bikers. And trail closures mean fewer bike sales--clearly not a good thing for specialty retailers.

Today, most suppliers have at least one freeride bike in their lines. Do these companies have a responsibility to ensure that freeriding grows in a responsible manner?

Do Something. What happens when you sell freeride bikes, but your customers don't have places to ride them?

It's a question that has bothered Kona's Mark Peterson for some time.

"Unfortunately, we are seeing illegal trail building and obstacles that just aren't being built appropriately. A lot of people who aren't riders, including land managers, don't see the difference between cross-country and freeriding," Peterson said.

"As a result, illegal trails and poor construction reflects on the sport as a whole. We are seeing some of the gains in access that we have made in the past get rolled back," he added.

Last year Kona teamed with IMBA to create Kona Klump grants to help mountain bikers build authorized freeride trails. "The Klump program is about being proactive and improving this situation before it becomes a problem," Peterson said.

Rocky Mountain also is nurturing freeriding in a responsible manner. It sponsored IMBA's 'Freeride Guide,' a booklet of tips on gaining approval for trails and building technical trails so as to minimize liability concerns.

"In Canada we are starting to face more of the trail access issues. As freeriding goes more mainstream and participation increases, there is a need to improve its credibility," said Dana Carmichael, Rocky Mountain's marketing director. "The idea is that if you start on the right foot, you can avoid a lot of potential trouble."

Who's Responsible? Executives at IMBA said the industry bears some responsibility for the manner in which freeriding develops. "Companies selling freeriding gear need to think about where that equipment will be used," said Pete Webber, IMBA's advocacy director.

"Freeriding requires new trails and constructed challenge parks. Companies that sell freeriding could really help develop these areas. If we don't team up to build riding areas, unauthorized trail construction and off-trail riding will occur and this can lead to trail closures," Webber said.

Not everyone agrees, however.

"Is the industry responsible? It's certainly a wise and respectable choice for companies to help with this, but as far as it being their responsibility, I can't point the finger at anyone," said Chris DiStefano, a Shimano spokesman and IMBA board member. "Sure, bike companies should be informed and involved, but I don't think they bear all the responsibility."

Tough Questions. Even if every supplier greed they were responsible for growing this segment of cycling in a responsible manner, the question remains, how do you accomplish that?

"It's a little difficult to make something as over-the-top risky as freeriding is, safe," said Joel Smith, Answer Products' director of brand management. "Look at Whistler's bike park--they built all the freeride jumps and stunts the right way, and their ambulance still goes up and down the hill like it's going to wear out its tires. You just can't take the risk out of freeriding."

How do you inspire mountain bikers to ask permission before they build trails? How do you get private landowners and public land managers to agree to these trails when injuries and liability lawsuits lurk?

IMBA has grappled with these questions since the late 1990s and concedes that you can't take the risk out of an inherently risky sport. Still, IMBA's Freeriding Guide covers a few of the ways to minimize the risk of liability lawsuits and gain land manager approval.

IMBA also is at work on a much larger trail building book that dedicates several chapters to freeriding that don't provoke the ire of land managers.

"I am glad that we made the decision to embrace freeriding and we are doing everything we can to make it work, instead of turning our back on it," said Tim Blumenthal, IMBA's executive director. "We have never been against freeriding, we just want it to develop the right way." --end--

----- Original Message -----

From: Mike Vandeman mjvande@pacbell.net
Sent: Saturday, May 01, 2004 6:47 AM
Subject: Another Mountain Biker Fatal Accident

> These are getting to be an almost common occurrence....

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> Mike

>

>

> Subject: (fwd) MTB Racer - RIP
> Date: Fri, 30 Apr 2004 18:33:12 -0700
>
> On Fri, 30 Apr 2004 16:27:35 -0400, in alt.mountain-bike "Ride-A-Lot"
> <[mitchell@\[nospam\]schnauzers.ws](mailto:mitchell@[nospam]schnauzers.ws)> wrote:
>
> <http://www.velonews.com/race/mtn/articles/5962.0.html>
> ===