

Subject:**Date:** Wed, 9 Jun 2004 15:53:25 -0700**From:** "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>**To:** "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>**CC:** "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

There is mounting concern over the impact of Mountain Biking in ecologically sensitive areas including in community parks. As a result, restrictions are being implemented everywhere. But the District of North Vancouver continues to spend considerable resources and funds to accommodate this sport even to the point of jeopardizing the ecology of its own local parks such as Mountain View Park.

Mountain Biking may be a great sport but, like any other specialized sport, it requires a specialized environment - even a child can see that. But the District Council including the "environmentalist" was virtually falling over herself when the bikers demonstrated before Council demanding concessions. This is notwithstanding the love for birds and the grim task of wishing to preserve shrubs on the side of roads. The Councillor made maximum hay out of the Mountain bikers efforts to charge ahead even as they urged their email readers to "kill" the picture. The picture being a photograph of Ernie Crist.

The latest concerns about the impact of mountain biking comes from the Natural History Society of Vancouver. In a recent letter to Susan Rogers, Section Manager, Parks Planning, it states among others, the Vancouver Natural History Society has a long standing interest in North Vancouver's natural environment. VNHS, one of BC's oldest and largest natural history organizations, was founded in 1918 by John Davidson, BC's first provincial Botanist. VNHS members throughout the Lower Mainland regularly visit North Vancouver's natural areas for birding, botanical, geological and other natural history pursuits.

The letter continues "the proliferation of mountain biking in recent years across the North Shore has resulted in an extensive network of trails with accompanying structures. The area of our principal concern and over which the DNV has most control, is the so called "Fromme" area. Fortunately, this area is not on Mount "Fromme" itself, but in fact extends from Mosquito Creek to Lynn Valley Creek above the urbanized area to about the seventh switchback of the old Grouse Mountain Highway. Our examination of this area has identified the following types of impact".

"Use of the forest as source of materials for trail construction

a) Living Cedar saplings and coarse woody debris on the forest floor are being used for construction of elaborate and extensive structures along bike trails. This activity has been going on for 10 years.

b) trail networking

c) bike trails, as with hiking trails, dissect habitat, creating island habitat. Some animal species avoid crossing

the inference is that the greater intensity of mountain biking east of the Seymour River area is extirpating bears and possibly other mammals from this area. As mountain biking, including both day and night, can be expected to increase over time, this type of wildlife impact will increase.

Old Growth

Within the DNV there are a number of old growth forests, old growth groves and isolated old growth trees. These old growth areas should be protected from certain types of recreation, in particular mountain biking.


The report makes recommendations which include the following points

Confine the boundaries of the mountain biking area of "Fromme" and stop the construction of further trails.

Decommission some mountain bike trails to increase the size of the island habitat areas".

The point is that no work should have been allowed until the strategic study is completed. The purpose of this strategic study was to determine a suitable place for such a specialized activity. But instead the District charged ahead in line with the demands of Mountain Bikers oblivious to the damage mountain biking is doing to the environment including in District Parks such as Mountain View Park, not to mention the amount of taxpayer's money which was spent and continues to be spent on this no win situation.

Ernie Crist

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