

**Subject: RE: Response to Monica Craver's letter sent Oct 13 2004**

**Date:** Mon, 18 Oct 2004 16:05:04 -0700

**From:** "Eric Pettit" <eric@dongurneyarchitect.com>

**To:** "M E Craver" <mecraver@shaw.ca>

**CC:** <rwalton@dnv.org>, <mmckeonholmes@dnv.org>, <lmuri@dnv.org>, <ecrist@dnv.org>, <anixon@dnv.org>, <council@dnv.org>, <James\_ridge@dnv.org>, <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <kost@fonvca.org>, <cagebc@yahoo.com>, <m.bragg@shaw.ca>, "Sharon Bader" <bader@alumni.sfu.ca>, <Richard\_Boase@dnv.org>

Hello Monica,

Thank you for taking the time to respond to my e-mail.

I understand your points, and agree that some of the trail work on the shore is not in the best interest of the environment. I agree that some of the renegade trail work done by kids on the lower part of Fromme should be removed, ("immonator" trail for example), and I agree that some of the trail names are not the most positive and uplifting names as you point out, But you have to remember that the majority of the participants in this sport are adolescent males, and we all know that that demographic is prone to making some bad choices until they grow up. That said, most of them do grow up to be contributing members of society. Aside for the immature names, the trails network itself and the access to a sport that is one of only a very few non-polluting, non petroleum based activities is the legacy I hope to leave behind for my kids, that is why I participate in trail maintenance, to insure the access to the forest is not shut down.

Now, there are a few things in your letter that I would like to respond to.

You call the switchbacks a "Wetland Bluff". This is an odd term; a wet-land and a bluff are 2 opposite things in my opinion. Bluffs are steep banks that water runs off of; Wet-lands are low lying areas where water collects and ponds.

As for mountain bikers choosing the line of Lower Griffen, I strongly believe that Lower Griffen and its traverses across the Bluff, was there as a hiking trail, long before Mountain biking was even invented. Mountain Biking was invented in the late 70's / early 80's, I would think that Griffen has been there a lot longer, but I can't be sure of this.

If we decommission this section of trail (or all trails), as you suggest, then how do you expect people to access and enjoy the forest you are trying to preserve. The trails network is the only way people can experience the beauty of the forest, if it were not of trails, then people would tromp through the forest floor, stomping paths here and there. You can not stop people from entering the forest; all you can do is provide solid sustainable trails the preserve the pristine forest around them. Isn't this why the DNV build the path in MVP in the first place, there was no clear trail through this Wet-Land, and therefore there was a web of routes that basically destroyed the forest floor. I'd be surprised to hear that you have never hiked this trail to access the upper forest, many of these trails in the forest would be un-useable if it were not for the NSMBA and the volunteers who maintain them, and not just for Mountain bikes, but for all users.

I object to the assumption that this trail and any trail will create a legacy void of biodiversity. The trail network does nothing to effect the natural biology of the forest. Water run-off may be re-directed effecting tiny areas, but in the end, the forest, and its bio-diversity are un-effected. I fully intend to re-plant the switchbacks with ferns and hostas' after I am done the repair work on these switchbacks, I feel the switches are and eyesore at this point due to poor water/erosion management, and believe that once I can control the water flow down this trail, I can then begin to build rocked in gardens with good water flow where plants can thrive. I dream that this section of trail will be thick with huge ferns in the next 5-10 years, and that the trail itself will be a thin thread that weaves the user back and forth through this lush landscape.

I do thank you for the efforts you put in to preserve the MVP pond and its fragile ecosystem. (I am not sure the pond needed to be saved as you claim, I have fears that it is a mosquito breeding ground and with West-Nile on the rise, I was concerned about the standing water /mud that sits in that hollow all summer waiting for the fall run-off, but I'm sure you looked into that). The park, forest floor and new path are all beautiful for family walks. the area around the pond was getting heavily trampled by users (all users, not just bikes), and the whole area looks a lot better and healthier now. As for you protecting the Biodiversity of the forest, and leaving a legacy, maybe you should re-focus your efforts. You are raising a bunch of fuss about a tiny (I repeat, tiny) part of the forested landscape of our great province. The areas affected by these trails you protest, and the species you assume you are saving, are only a problem in your backyard. There is a great big world beyond MVP, and there are people, groups, companies and environmental disasters happening that are causing much more significant and serious damage to the same ecosystem you claim to be saving, and on a much, much larger scale. Maybe you should put your energy into fighting a cause that really will save the environment and these endangered species. Of all the villains against the environment, I'm sure the Mountain Biker rates pretty low.

As for the last line in you e-mail "If you can't take the heat, stay out of the kitchen". I am not in the kitchen; I have done nothing to vilify you. I just asked that YOU not use my web login name and the work I am doing to improve a deteriorating trail as a weapon against Mountain biking. Your e-mail to the DNV painted me as a bad guy destroying the forest and reeking havoc on the sensitive ecosystem of MVP. I am not working in an area that affects the pond or the park at all, and I often do maintenance in MVP on my way to and from the switchbacks. I rake the path to hide exposed rocks and smooth out the corners as the new path is maturing, I pick up garbage, and remove branches and things that fall of the pathway. Can you say the same?

**Eric Pettit**

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

**From:** M E Craver [mailto:mecraver@shaw.ca]

**Sent:** Monday, October 18, 2004 2:21 PM

**To:** Eric Pettit

**Cc:** rwalton@dnv.org; mmckeeonholmes@dnv.org; lmuri@dnv.org; ecrist@dnv.org; anixon@dnv.org; council@dnv.org; James\_ridge@dnv.org; fonvca@fonvca.org; kost@fonvca.org; cagebc@yahoo.com; m.bragg@shaw.ca; Sharon Bader; Richard\_Boase@dnv.org

**Subject:** Re: Response to Monica Craver's letter sent Oct 13 2004

Dear Eric: If DNV Parks have given you "permits" to build, modify and maintain a steep wetland bluff so you and your buddies can continue to ride it, so be it. . It never ceases to amaze me how many mountain bikers are trying to "rationalize" their sport to those like me who shake their heads in disbelief at the total lack of common sense this sport has toward any environmental concerns. It amazes me even more that mountain bikers decided many years ago that the Lower Griffen switchbacks that traverse a very steep wetland bluff was chosen as an "ideal place" to ride in the first place. You may have been given permits to "look after" Lower Griffen, but should you? Commonsense about erosion and wet weather riding tells me this kind of trail should be decommissioned, period.

In this end, it is our elected Councillors (and Mayor?) who will be making the decision whether our natural forest and mountain areas will be given up to high impact recreational sports. They have heard both sides of the argument and have received many scientific reports, etc. Whatever decision these folk make for our forest and mountain area will affect those DNV lands for many years to come. Time will tell whether their decision for the Alpine Plan will be a wise one or not. But as hindsight is always 20/20, I am not very hopeful at this time. This is just from observation, so far.

We are still feeling the effects of decisions made for our environment by our grandparents, etc. today. Safe pesticides are found to be anything but (affecting us today). Trees clearcut many years ago on these very forest lands were detrimental to the flora and fauna then, and some biodiversity was lost (and we still do not know everything we have lost). Non-native flora and fauna brought in for whatever reason that was thought good, is anything but. The smaller footprint we can leave in the forest, the better for ensuring healthy biodiversity. From what I have seen, mountain biking has left a very large footprint in our forests, period. This is not the legacy I wish to leave my children and grandchildren. I am saddened that you want to leave a forest devoid of rich biodiversity to your children. It seems that retaining trails with the names of "Severed Dick, Bitches Brew, and Roach Clip" are the legacy mountain bikers wish to leave future generations. Yes, it seems our views on what the environment can and cannot sustain are worlds apart. But as I am not an elected official, the final decision is out of both our hands. Thank you.

Monica Craver

By the way do you really think that my family and I have not been "vilified" to DNV Council by your fellow riders/trail builders? If you can't take the heat, stay out of the kitchen.