

Subject: FW: [Fwd: [Fwd: FERC denial to Lyle]]

Date: Mon, 28 Feb 2005 07:49:19 -0800

From: "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>

To: <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <Cagebc@yahoo.com>

CC: "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>, "Susan Rogers" <Susan_Rogers@dnv.org>, "Richard Boulton" <Richard_Boulton@dnv.org>

----- Original Message ----- To the attention of the Mayor and Council:

I strongly urge you to consider the negative impacts to natural resources and the safety of other trail users in your trail management plan before allowing mountain bike use in the affected forest area. I believe that if you investigate, you will find a growing recognition of the associated problems and increased cost of maintaining trails where bikes have access.

There is no question that the mountain bike organizations are well organized and often involve impressive numbers, but that is not a valid reason to allow them to displace, or to define the recreation experience, for others who are seeking peaceful enjoyment as part of their recreation experience.

In California, according to a Department of Water Resources Recreation Study, nearly one third of the population of California will be between 55 and 75 years old. It is logical to assume then that recreation activities that are less physically demanding (especially hiking) will show the most increase in participation as our population of "baby boomers" reach retirement age.

Hiking and horse back riding are much more compatible activities and are typically enjoyed more by those who seek to enjoy nature, including wildlife, than the average mountain biker who typically rides at faster speeds and in a manner which often results in injury to even the lone rider. This is corroborated by a recent Calif. Department of Water Resources study which lists mountain biking and whitewater rafting under the heading of "ADVENTURE AND HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES". It also states that, "Often, specialized recreation facilities are needed to support these types of activities."

A study sponsored by a bicyclist group indicated that more serious accidents occurred involving mountain bikers than (paved) road bikers, even including the road accidents which resulted from vehicles vs. bikes.

Even though most incidents/accidents are not reported to land managers unless a medical response is required, there is no shortage of information available on the problems which result from incidents/accidents involving mountain bikes. There are also the impacts of soil erosion and damage to vegetation to consider. The Griffith Park Report from the L.A. area is especially informative.

I am forwarding a document issued recently by the (U.S.) Federal Energy Regulatory Commission after they released an environmental assessment (EA) of a hiking equestrian trail system in California. Despite a preponderance of letters from mt. bikers claiming that they had a "right" to use the hiking equestrian trails, FERC looked at the "evidence" of problems associated with mt. bike use on trails that they received as part of the public response and did not yield to the bicyclists' pressure. After determining that these trails had been improperly converted by a state agency to multi use, FERC ordered the

restoration of the hiking equestrian designation. (This forwarded document is a response to a request by a bicyclist for rehearing of that decision).

Of note (page 4) is the recognition by this Federal agency that the addition of bikes was not warranted and, "To the contrary, maintaining trails within the (FERC) project for use only by equestrians and hikers offers a unique recreational experience worthy of preservation. In addition, shared use of trails increases safety concerns, user conflicts, and necessitates additional trail maintenance and modification measures".

The FERC Final Environmental Assessment also recognized that some trail useres were discouraged from using trails where mountain bike use was allowed because of concerns over safety.

There are plenty of other areas where mt. bike use is appropriate. I believe responsible management of resources requires that some areas must be set aside in which mechanized vehicles and/or wheels are not permitted. I am confident that this position has already been supported by courts within the U.S. where bicyclists have filed suit after being denied access to certain trails. If that were not the case, you would, no doubt, have been presented that information/ evidence by local bicyclists.

You have a special treasure also worthy of preservation. You have been entrusted with the responsibility for protecting that irreplaceable resource. I hope that you will act in a manner worthy of that trust by keeping wheels off of the trails.

Sincerely,

Cathy Hodges
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