

Subject: Fwd: What are you doing?
From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>
Date: 30/10/2015 1:04 PM
To: Corrie Kost <corrie@kost.ca>

No post. FONVCA review.

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: What are you doing?
Date: Fri, 30 Oct 2015 12:50:05 -0700
From: Monica Craver <mecraver@shaw.ca>
To: DNVMayor and Council <council@dnv.org>, Mayor&Council (DWV) <MayorandCouncil@westvancouver.ca>
CC: fonvca@fonvca.org, West Van Matters Carolanne R. <EditorWVM@westvan.org>

Dear Mayors and Councils:

Sometimes an article appears that puts things into a much better perspective. Why are mountain bikers so hell-bent on turning our once peaceful forests into stressful places, where nature must be conquered (riding, trail digging, etc.) -- not appreciated on its own terms. And, mountain biking is proving to be far from healthy, for both the body and the natural environment it pummels...

We need to teach our children how to slow down in a world that is already filled with stress. Mountain biking, and other extreme sports, is NOT the answer to health and well being inside our forests and natural places, as one writer discovers...

http://www.telluridenews.com/opinion/columnists/article_85df0d0e-7e92-11e5-b917-7b66e171b84b.html

Forest baths

Katie Klingsporn, Cottonwoods | Posted: Thursday, October 29, 2015

According to the calendar, fall begins on Sept. 23. But for me, its official start is the day Ballard changes out of its summer greens into a tarnished copper cloak. It seems to happen overnight, the death of the false hellebore up high, and its message is irrefutable: summer is over.

Thus begins the loveliest time of the year in Telluride. The mornings grow cold, the shadows grow long and the season unfolds in golden perfection. And since that day in early September when Ballard changed, this fall has stacked up as among the best I've seen.

Its heart-piercingly beautiful, this season. I dont use the word splendiferous often, but it has perhaps no better application than a sunny day in September in the San

Juans, and there were a lot of those. What began as scattered bits of gold and orange in the understory grew into a riot of color as the aspen trees transitioned. Explosions of gold in the canopy, the sky a concentrated hyper-blue and leaves like yellow coins littering the trails. It was hard to walk to the post office without falling over in wonder.

But this isnt just me waxing on about the beauty of fall. Its about something else. Something that makes my mountain biking buddies look at me funny and my parents pause as if Ive gone off the New Age deep end.

Its about forest bathing.

Bear with me.

Forest bathing is a tenet of preventative health in Japan that is gaining traction in America and beyond as more people learn of its physiological and mental benefits. The practice, also known as shinrin-yoku, is simple. Hang out in nature and experience it with all your senses. Walk slowly through the forest, take in the patterns of the leaves, the symmetry of flowers and the bizarre colors of lichens. Listen to the extraordinarily sweet chirp of songbirds, the rustle of animals in the underbrush, the melody of running water. Pick a bluebell and pop it in your mouth to taste the land, or crush sage between your hands to inhale the smell of high desert. Take a dip in the river.

And guess what? Its good for you. Shinrin-yoku, coined by the Japanese government back in 1982, was inspired by ancient Eastern practices of Shinto and Buddhism. **Today, Japan has designated forest trails, and doctors prescribe shinrin-yoku to overworked professionals and anxious children to relieve stress.** Japan isnt alone in touting nature as a healer. **Growing research suggests that it improves cognition and can boost human empathy, and that it reduces depression along with heart rate, blood pressure and sympathetic nerve activity.**

The first time I heard of forest bathing was in July. I was meandering through the forest in my favorite mushroom spot, picking chanterelles with four friends. This is like forest bathing, my friend Lexi said. Huh? the rest of us responded.

She explained, and Ill admit I started out skeptical. It sounded a little too woo-woo for me. But when I thought about it, it lent reason to the deep satisfaction and peace Ive long gotten from mushroom hunting. And the more I considered the way I interacted with the landscape, the more of a believer I became.

So I started taking forest baths. Turns out, fall is the ideal season for shinrin-yoku. Many hours were spent under aspen trees, watching the leaves flutter serenely to earth, feeling the final burst of the suns summer heat on my skin, inhaling the sweet smell of decaying leaves and dozing in the narcotic beauty of it all. I often wasnt alone; forest bathing with friends only enhances the experience. **Each time, it left me calm, alert and grateful.**

The baths helped lead to an epiphany: In the last decade I had grown separate from nature without even realizing it. I often wore headphones while biking or snowboarding, drowning out any sounds. I moved quickly, stopped infrequently and was impatient with dawdlers. My priority was usually maximizing the workout. Gorgeous views and shared experiences were an added benefit, and I certainly appreciated them. But mostly, I was focused on moving through the landscape, not being part of it. **With shinrin-yoku, the point is to steep yourself in the fragrant, burbling, chirping, swaying, yipping, serene or chaotic tableau of nature** be it shady aspen grove, exposed scree field or under a tree in your yard. And what you get in exchange is something I would argue is more beneficial than a workout.

Now that the colors have drained from the mountains and snow covers the peaks, I'm left to wonder how forest bathing will go in the winter. I don't plan to stop, but I'll have to get creative. One of those wearable sleeping bags may be in order.

It is proving to be very unfair to our children's and future generations' health and well being, while both DNV and DWV are continuing to promote dangerous and environmentally destructive activities, that are uncontained or properly controlled/enforced...

Another person put it all so succinctly in a comment to an article, "[Does Exercise Slow the Aging Process?](#)", in the NY Times:

gw

usa [1 day ago](#)

"The only problem I have with this article is the photo. **Mountain biking is dangerous for all ages, with life-threatening injuries so common the medical field lists it as an "extreme sport."** Middle-aged men trying to recapture their youth and prove their prowess are unusually at risk of heart attacks. Broken bones, concussions, head injuries, etc. are common for all ages.

It's not even good for trails, causing erosion that makes more and more trail building necessary, muddying creeks and running over anything in their path, with too little time to discriminate. And it's a nuisance to hikers to have someone barreling down on you shouting to get out of their way when you're just trying to be out peacefully enjoying nature."

Mountain biking is clearly a detriment to "forest bathers, like myself... Many seniors and others choose to hike for health and peace. But, today, many of us will not go into the forests because of the mountain biking threat to our health and peaceful well being. We cannot do so, as long as mountain bikers "share" the same trails. Even multi-use paths become dangerous when "shared" with speeding, careless cyclists.

Mountain biking must be contained, and separated from hiking trails. Better still, this is a sport which needs to be placed inside any one or more of our three existing ski resorts on the North Shore -- not the present mountain bike sprawl, with endless riding and trail building, four seasons a year indiscriminate activities. What good are damaged forests and watersheds in the battle against climate change? It is a serious question, while municipalities continue to talk about "sustainable, resilient cities, etc." The inclusion of so much uncontrolled extreme off-road/freeride mountain biking sprawl on our North Shore exposes the crass hypocrisy of it all this planning to "mitigate" climate change, etc. We see too much of this hypocrisy in North Vancouver District, as it is, in regards to catering to mountain biking.

I am saddened to see that District of West Vancouver is now following District of North Vancouver's missteps on mountain biking (after approving the Upper Lands "mountain bike plan"). There is no common sense in it. It is clearly just about bowing to the aggressive mountain biking lobby whose appetite is insatiable (as we can see from non-stop riding and new trail digging activities in North Vancouver, alone).

--Monica Craver--

(Please DO NOT publish my address, DWV. Thank you.)

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Tread softly! All the earth is holy ground.

~ Christina Rossetti (Psalm 24),
from "A Later Life: A Double Sonnet of Sonnets"