

**Meeting Minutes**

**MOUNTAIN BIKE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MBAC)**

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Wednesday, October 21, 2020

6:00 – 9:00 PM

CRD Engagement Centre  
625 Fisgard Street  
Victoria, BC V8W 1R7

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**PRESENT:**

A. Soraya, H. Prince, H. Rose, A. Pape-Salmon (acting for D. Cammiade), I. Charles, D. Leong, T. Fenwick, B. von Sacken, C. Plant (ex officio & CRD Board Chair), J. Ellis (Consultant and Chair), L. Ramsay (Recorder)

**STAFF:**

T. Moss, Manager, Visitor Services & Community Engagement; B. Wyman, Recreation Program Coordinator; J. Leahy, Senior Manager Regional Parks; C. Plant (ex officio & CRD Board Chair)

**GUESTS:**

None

**REGRETS:**

D. Cammiade, T. Archer

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

**1. Territorial Acknowledgement**

**2. Approval of Agenda:**

Agenda for the October 7, 2020 Mountain Bike Advisory Committee meeting.

**MOVED by J. Ellis, SECONDED by H. Rose**  
**That the agenda be approved and circulated.**

**CARRIED**

**3. Adoption of Minutes:**

Minutes for the October 7, 2020 Mountain Bike Advisory Committee meeting.

**MOVED by Tara, SECONDED by B. von Sacken**  
**That the minutes be approved and circulated.**

Discussion ensued on two major points:

1. Page 3, Point 6.1(a)1 – It was recognized there is a limited number of beginner trails due in part to construction challenges provided by the terrain in the CRD. Members wished to see “can be offered due to the more challenging terrain and which also require more maintenance” removed.

**MOVED by H. Rose, SECONDED by A. Soraya**

**That the minutes be changed to more clearly reflect the limited amount of beginner trails, specifically, “Trail – there are a limited amount of beginner trails”. **CARRIED****

2. Page 2-3, Point 6.1 – Concern was expressed that focusing on five MTB disciplines could result in lack of clarity and understanding in the recommendations report given that some of the disciplines overlap. It was suggested that, for the purposes of the report, that the disciplines be divided into two categories – ‘Trails’ and ‘Gravity’ riding experiences. Chair Ellis reminded the committee that the minutes capture the discussions of the group and that the minutes should not be changed to reflect discussions not had at the meeting. However, Chair Ellis did advise that the idea of simplifying mountain bike disciplines into “Trail” and “Gravity” could be beneficial, but should also separate “Downhill” as the needs of this activity will raise different considerations for CRD Parks (e.g. need for vehicle access roads for shuttling, potential one way trails).

**ACTION ITEM: Chair Ellis to look at simplifying the mountain bike disciplines in the draft recommendations report.**

#### **4. Chair’s Remarks:**

##### **Interim Drafts**

- Chair Ellis updated the committee that the draft recommendations report will be distributed in advance of the November 18 meeting along with an online survey to test for consensus and identify content in the report that require further discussion.

##### **Email Exchanges**

- To ensure all members of the MBAC have equal opportunity to participate, and recognizing our committee desire for consensus decision-making, Chair Ellis encourages all members to bring all topics of discussion to the regular MBAC meetings and refrain from initiating email-based discussions on topics.

##### **Criteria to Help Determine where MTB is Most Appropriate –**

- Chair Ellis advised the MBAC that, following the Oct 7, 2020 MBAC meeting, members D. Cammiade and A. Soraya had raised a few points through email exchanges with a subset of the MBAC. In keeping with the need to raise all discussions at the MBAC table, Chair Ellis shared the main points being made in the emails.
  - D. Cammiade - *“Are there any CRD Parks that do not allow hiking? If there are not, then I don’t agree that there should be a filter that CRD uses to determine if mountain biking should be disallowed in a park. It is scientifically proven that on properly designed, constructed and maintained trails, hikes and bikers have the same impact on the*

*environment. So if the management plan and zoning allows for hiking then it should also allow for mountain biking”.*

- A. Soraya - *“I’d like to submit to the group that the following question be of utmost importance to this committee. We need to explore this rigorously and without bias in order for our recommendations to be useful and effective. ‘What are the objective and measurable environmental impacts (on soil, vegetation, animals and ecosystems) of mountain biking on properly designed, constructed and maintained trails, and how do those impacts compare with the impacts of other forms of human powered trail use?’”*
- Chair Ellis advised the MBAC that the environmental impacts of mountain and approaches to mitigate environmental impacts is the focus of the November 4, 2020 meeting. Chair Ellis indicated that the question proposed by A. Soraya would not be included in the agenda as a focused question for the MBAC to debate given that the CRD will rely directly on the literature to provide insights, not the recommendations of the MBAC, into the environmental impacts of mountain biking and other activities. However, Chair Ellis did indicate that a brief overview of the literature, as it stands today, would be provided during the introduction presentation on November 4 and a brief summary of the literature will be included in the recommendation report. Chair Ellis also encouraged all members to review the available literature that has been posted to the SharePoint site.
- J. Leahy, Senior Manager of Regional Parks, confirmed that the CRD is aware of, and has reviewed, the literature that exists on the environmental impacts of mountain biking and other activities. CRD Staff will rely on the literature to inform their understanding of the environmental impacts of mountain biking.
- J. Leahy, Senior Manager of Regional Parks, advised that the CRD staff do need input from MBAC on the criteria that should be used to help assess which regional parks are more appropriate for mountain biking. CRD staff acknowledged that, in the past, there has not been an overly structured approach assessing the appropriateness of various recreational activities in regional parks. CRD Staff are working to develop a more structured and consistent approach and mountain biking is the first activity being studied.
- T. Fenwick shared her opinion that important evidence gaps remain in the literature regarding the environmental impacts of mountain biking and that some of the literature reviews that are being widely circulated are dated.

## **5. Committee Business:**

### **5.1 File-Sharing Site**

#### **a) Resources**

- Chair Ellis reminded members to continue to check the SharePoint site as new resources will be added as they are discovered or provided by members.

**b) Sharing the CRD - SIMBS agreement**

- CRD staff have obtained approval to share the CRD - SIMBS Mount Work – Hartland License Agreement with the MBAC. Concerns about the sharing of personal information were discussed.

**ACTION ITEM - SIMBS will redact the personal information from the agreement and send it to Chair Ellis for posting on SharePoint, including the CRD contact information.**

Members should note the following from CRD Staff about the agreement:

*“We’ve spoken with our Legal Department, and we understand we do not have a boilerplate or typical language for such an agreement. CRD would consider each proposal for a license agreement as unique and would be open to discussions and ideas that are not reflected in this site-specific license agreement. Some considerations of CRD would be that the service is being delivered to the public (e.g., trail building), the activity and works are being undertaken in a safe and risk-mitigated way, and the organization or group working on the project carries insurance for its negligence or wrongful acts, or does certain works under CRD’s volunteer insurance policy.”*

**c) Park Classifications & Zoning**

- At meeting #2, CRD staff were asked to provide a list of parks and their classifications and identify which parks contain recreation zones. Chair Ellis has posted an excel file to the SharePoint site with this information.
- At meeting #2, it was questioned whether a park’s classification can be changed. CRD Staff advised that they are not aware of classification changes occurring in the past. CRD Staff advised that park classification is determined during the acquisition process and are set based on clear criteria which are outlined in the strategic plan. In addition, the strategic plan outlines what parks classes are greatest priority for acquisition.
- At meeting #2, it was questioned whether the zoning within a park can be amended outside of the management planning process. CRD Staff advised that it is important to be aware that development of the original management plan underwent significant public, indigenous and stakeholder engagement process over a 2-3 year period. Zoning changes are major amendments and there would have to an equivalent engagement and evaluation process before the change could be made. CRD Parks does not have a set process for making such amendments.
- Chair Ellis advised the MBAC that, through this process, they are providing advice on system wide guidelines. The current zoning does not provide clear direction on what types of mountain biking disciplines could be considered within each zone. The MBAC’s advice can provide recommendations on what types of mountain biking could be considered in each zone which would provide direction to the CRD management planning process and management of each zone.

**ACTION ITEM: Chair Ellis to include recommendations about what types of mountain biking align with the management intents of each park classification and zone.**

**5.2 Meeting # 1 Minutes Posted**

- Chair Ellis advised members that the meeting minutes for meeting #1 have been posted to the CRD website. Members are reminded to share the minutes through the CRD website URL.

**6. MBAC Advice & Guidance:**

**Question #1:**

**6.1 How can mountain biking and mountain bike trails be integrated with and managed to avoid / minimize negative impacts on other approved recreational users of regional parks?**

**What conflicts are most frequently sighted between mountain biking and other activities in regional parks?**

a) MBAC discussed the above question and generated the following ideas:

- Speed and control – A safety issue which will cause bikers to be selective about where to go for themselves and/or their children.
- Negative experiences – It was noted that even a single negative experience (e.g., right-of-way on the trails) can have a stronger impact and last longer than a positive experience. When negative interactions occur, some people tend to hold on to the memory of those conflicts and experiences and share them with others.
- Etiquette
- Off-trail travel
- Riding in, or a trail being developed (unsanctioned and sanctioned) in, environmentally sensitive areas, this can create a conflict as it can create a perception that there is a lack of education, understanding and appreciation of nature.
- Failing to follow physical distancing due to Covid-19.
- Unwelcoming to others in mountain biking areas.
- Unpermitted trail uses and territorial/entitlement behaviours is a source of conflict on the trails including multiuse trails – not welcoming other users of understanding what uses are permitted on specific trails.
- Wildlife being chased out of natural habitats.
- Lack of signage -- In many cases, there is not enough signage to clearly indicate what is authorized
- People accidentally/purposefully find their way onto trails that do not permit their activity.

- Scaring/startling equestrians.
- Dogs on the trails, though most are reported by members to be well behaved, and commercial dog walkers can create safety concerns and fear for some users.

**What strategies should be applied to improve integration and avoid / minimize conflicts between MTB and other recreational users of regional parks?**

a) MBAC discussed the strategies that should be applied to minimize conflicts and generated the following ideas:

- Develop code of conduct and etiquette program as part of a visitor education program such as Leave No Trace.
- Develop program and materials to improve riders' reputation in community.
- Incentivize riders to join mountain biking clubs.
- Ensure safe and sustainable trail design.
  - For areas where multiple activities cannot mix safely, develop bypass routes to avoid conflicts.
- Ensure there is regulation and enforcement of reckless undesirable behaviours for those who do not abiding by the rules.
- Provide well placed and appropriate signage – but not too many that they take away from the setting
  - Regulatory signs (permitted activities)
  - Educational signs (etiquette)
  - Wayfinding and way markers
  - Interpretive
  - Incorporate technologies such as QR (quick response) codes
- Develop, or utilize existing, Visitor applications to improve visitor knowledge and education and help them find the trails for their activities. Ensure accurate information is included in existing apps (e.g. Trailforks).
- Ensure an adequate supply of purpose-built trails that provide the needed experiences.
- Trail opportunities – Currently, there is not an adequate supply of trails for mountain biking.
- Provide upfront and early information to the community about upcoming changes to mountain biking in regional parks. And provide early information to clubs on any changes.
- Pathway to purchase for visitors regarding hikers and mountain bikers.

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**Question #2:**

**6.2 Rogue, or unauthorized trail building, is on the rise in regional parks. What promising practices can be implemented to avoid or limit unauthorized trail building?**

**Why are rogue trails being built in CRD Regional Park?**

- a) MBAC discussed why rogue trails are being built in regional parks. The following reasons were identified:
- Perception that there is a significant amount of land in regional parks and the watershed.
  - Impatient with the lack of clear process for proposing, planning, and approving sanctioned trails.
  - The current supply of mountain bike trails is insufficient to meet current and future demands.
  - Very few new mountain bike trails and experiences are being developed. Some riders are getting tired of riding the same trails and looking for new experiences.
  - The riding community is seeing the success other communities are having with mountain biking and see “what the riding here could be”.
  - Some have a sense of hopelessness whereby they believe that there will not be any more authorized trails in the parks – they have given up.
  - The current location and distribution of trails may not be sited close to where riders are living (e.g. youth want to be able to ride from where they live and access trail without the need for cars, even if the trails are small).
  - Overcrowding in the current riding destinations is becoming an issue, both with the trails and the parking lots in the main riding areas.

**What promising practices should be implemented to avoid or limit unauthorized trail building?**

- b) MBAC discussed the practices that could be implemented to avoid or limit unauthorized trail building. The following practices were identified:
- Develop a new and sufficient supply of trails that meet users’ needs in locations that can be accessed.
  - Establish and communication a clear proposal and approval process for the development of new mountain bike trails.
  - Allow volunteer labour to build trails and/or bring builders in. Building on best practices in other jurisdictions, provide a clear mechanism to support volunteers in the development and management of mountain bike trails. Resolve the current issue that unionized employees are the only ones that can build trails.
  - Give rogue builders an outlet to build legally by giving them a trail to build under the auspices of an organization.
  - Provide training on how to build quality, sustainable and safe trails and trail maintenance and management for volunteers and for staff.

- Once clear development and approval process is in place, judiciously pursue (e.g. consider age of builders, intent) compliance assurance (officer presence, verbal / written warnings, enforcement) for frequent offenders.
- Quickly decommission unsanctioned trail builds. Be sure to apply good design in the decommissioning approach to avoid creating public safety risks and work with the clubs in advance of decommissioning so public education and communications can be delivered jointly.
- Partner with clubs to develop communications and education approaches on rogue trail building and its impacts and to discourage the activity.
- Engage the clubs as partners:
  - Clubs can play a role between endorsement and enforcement.
  - Clubs can support self-policing and peer pressure
  - Clubs can endorse trail approval processes and standards helping to legitimize sanctioned trail building

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**Question #3:**

**6.3 The popularity of e-MTBs (electric mountain bikes) continues to grow. Are e-MTBs appropriate in regional parks and how should they be managed?**

**What, if any, concerns exist around the use of electric mountain bikes (modified from e-assist) in regional parks?**

- a) Motor Assisted Cycle Definition
  - Though the CRD has yet to prepare an explicit written policy on the use of electric mountain bikes in regional parks or, more generally electric bicycle use on regional trails, Chair Ellis, and CRD Staff, confirmed that the CRD applies the definition of a Motor Assisted Cycle, as defined in the British Columbia Motor Assisted Cycle Regulation ([https://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/151\\_2002](https://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/151_2002)). Currently, the CRD permits electric bicycles that meet the definition of a motor assisted cycle to be used on any regional trails or on trails in regional parks that permit cycling. There was a great deal of discussion and some confusion amongst members of MBAC about this definition and what electric bikes are currently permitted.
  - Chair Ellis advised MBAC that BC Parks (responsible for managing trail use within provincial parks and protected areas), Recreation Sites and Trails BC (responsible for managing trail use on crown lands) and Parks Canada (responsible for managing trail use in national parks) have developed their own policies which more effectively classify electric bicycles and provide clearer direction on what types of trails each class of electric bicycle is permitted to used on.
- b) With limited time remaining in the meeting, the MBAC began discussion on the concerns that exist around the use of electric mountain bikes in regional parks. The MBAC acknowledged the e-bikes are relatively new and that research into their impacts, and comparison of those impacts to conventional



mountain biking, is limited. Though few to no known studies were available to support these concerns, the MBAC identified the potential for:

- Safety concerns –less experienced riders may be able to travel faster with potentially less skill to manage their bicycles at those speeds which may pose greater safety risks to the rider and other trail users. E-bikes may also allow more riders to travel further and more quickly which may lead to safety concerns as a result of malfunctions, accidents and riders being unprepared.
- E-bikes may increase the level of visitation and use in more remote areas which may add greater stress and strain on wildlife populations and limited visitor infrastructure (e.g. washrooms, rest areas).
- E-bikes can create inter-activity conflict with conventional mountain bike riders as some conventional riders may see e-bikes as motorized recreation instead of non-motorized, as a form of cheating, as lazy or may have assumptions that they create greater environmental and trail impacts.
- It needs to be noted that some MBAC members have an overriding question about whether E-bikes create more impacts and that this is really what should drive whether e-bikes should be managed differently than non e-bikes. Chair Ellis advised members of a recent IMBA study that showed that impact of e-assist mountain bikes (not class 2 or 3 e-bikes) were found to create similar impacts on trails as conventional mountain bikes. Other impacts (e.g. wildlife, off-trail travel, conflicts, confirming increased safety risks) do not appear to have been studied yet.
- Some MBAC members suggested the managing e-bike use in regional parks will be very difficult, if not impossible to enforce, as it is very easy to modify the bikes and very difficult to determine if the bikes are compliant or not.

**What classes of e-MTBs are appropriate in regional parks where mountain biking is permitted?**

- a) As there was considerable confusion around what types of electric bikes are currently permitted in regional parks, the MBAC ran out of time to discuss this question.

**Should CRD Regional Parks develop a clear policy around e-MTB use in Regional Parks?**

- a) The MBAC discussed the benefits of CRD Parks aligning their approach to managing e-bikes in parks with the approaches that have been taken by other parks and trail managers who are leaders in the development of e-bike policies. Though time for this discussion was limited, there was agreement that the topic of e-bike use in regional parks requires more detailed study and consideration than is available to MBAC and because the recommendations could have implications on active transportation and regional trails whose users are not well represented by MBAC. As

such, MBAC recommends that the CRD work with a broad range of trail users to develop a clear policy on e-bike use in regional parks and on regional trails.

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**7. Next Meeting:**

The next MBAC meeting will be November 4, 2020

**8. Adjournment:**

**MOVED TO adjourn the meeting at 9:04 p.m. by A. Pape-Salmon; seconded by C. Plant. CARRIED**