

**Meeting Minutes**

**MOUNTAIN BIKE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MBAC)**

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Wednesday, November 4, 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, D. Cammiade, D. Leong, T. Fenwick, T. Archer, 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:**

I. Charles

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

**1. Territorial Acknowledgement**

**2. Approval of Agenda:**

Agenda for the November 4, 2020 Mountain Bike Advisory Committee meeting.

**MOVED by T. Fenwick and SECONDED by H. Rose that one topic be added to the agenda. CARRIED**

**3. Adoption of Minutes:**

Minutes for the October 21, 2020 Mountain Bike Advisory Committee meeting.

**MOVED by D. Cammiade and SECONDED by B. von Sacken**

**That the minutes be changed on page 3, final point in section 4: “T. Fenwick shared her opinion that remain important evidence gaps in the literature regarding environmental impacts of mountain biking and hiking and that some literature reviews that are being widely circulated are outdated.”**

**CARRIED**

**4. Chair’s Remarks:**

Chair Ellis thanked committee members and CRD staff for the excellent work and strong collaboration to date. Chair Ellis reminded members that draft of the Advice

and Guidance Report will commence after tonight's meeting and will be provide for MBAC review in advance of the November 18, 2020 meeting.

**5. Committee Business:**

**5.1 File-Sharing Site**

The redacted SIMBS agreement pertaining to Hartland / Mount Work mountain bike area has been posted on the SharePoint site.

**5.2 Meeting #2**

Minutes from Meeting Two are now posted on the SharePoint site. MBAC members are invited to send them out to their respective constituents.

**5.3 Additional Agenda Item -- Meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Chair Ellis advised that the MBAC may wish to schedule an additional meeting for December 2, 2020 as a contingency should additional time be required to discuss and reach consensus on the draft Advice & Guidance Report.

**MOVED by C. Plant and SECONDED by H. Prince.**

**That an additional meeting be added on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, in the event there is not time to fully discuss and reach consensus on Chair Ellis' draft report which will be tabled in advance of the November 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.**

*Discussion*

Discussion arose as to whether an ongoing committee will be established to monitor the progress of MBAC's recommendations. Chair Ellis advised that the MBAC's terms of reference indicates that the MBAC will serve until the final mountain bike guidelines are approved by the Board. The MBAC, as it exists, does not have a mandate to continue as an advisory committee for the implementation of the guidelines.

CRD Chair Plant advised that the MBAC could, however, recommend that an advisory committee be formed to maintain an ongoing dialogue with user groups and provide advice to the CRD on the implementation of the guidelines and other operational matters regarding mountain biking in regional parks.

Chair Ellis deferred further conversation on the merits of an ongoing advisory committee to agenda item 6.3.

**CARRIED**

**6. MBAC Advice & Guidance:**

**Question #1:**

**6.1 How can mountain biking and mountain bike trails be managed to avoid/minimize impacts to ecological, indigenous, and cultural heritage values in regional parks?**

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

- Provide enough quality trail experiences that provide the experience people are looking for so that rogue trail building is no longer appealing.
- Careful planning and at a regional scale to ensure that quality and purpose-built trails are created which provide a range of activities but do not create overly fragmented parks (e.g., as with city networks). It is essential to have an overall plan for mountain biking in the region.
- Identify areas where the density of trails could be reduced (e.g., replacing three bad trails with one good one).
- Signage at trailheads and along trails where there are sensitive areas to remind users to stay on the trails. Signage could be providing directions as well as educational information. Education would also include “Rules” of use. When trails are to be decommissioned, provide the reason(s) why in signage.
- Undertake or require extensive surveys for SAR, habitat, archeological before approvals are given for new trail development or formalizing of unauthorized trails.
- Create purpose-designed trails for traffic (safety, environmental sustainability, and desire) and decommissioning or rerouting of unsustainable trails.
- Establish consistent agreements with volunteer groups and societies to enable trail maintenance and development. Include education and training of volunteers in trail development and maintenance. The MBAC noted that the CRD board priorities identified increasing and supporting volunteerism.
- Ensure there is ongoing monitoring of trail conditions and impacts and research by clubs and CRD.
- Noted as a high priority, there is a need to provide opportunities for regional park recreational groups and conservation organizations to interact, educate, and understand each other and network. This integration will build stronger relationships, trust and better collaboration and advance regional parks management. MBAC would like to see it as a deliberate targeted approach rather than an ad hoc approach to this.
- Indigenous communities should be engaged at the very start of trail development planning and design by clubs and the CRD to ensure indigenous values are understood and can be considered. Existing CRD processes for indigenous engagement should be followed in the trail planning, approval and construction processes.
- “Smile and say hi” etiquette – greeting people you come across helps with user conflicts.

- Wildlife cameras and traf-x counters are especially useful and important in monitoring wildlife trail usage and interactions with users.
- It was noted that the CRD has limited resourcing and capacity, management actions need to be mindful of the fiscal realities and should use strategies that will most likely result in the greatest value.
- Spatial, seasonal, and time-based closures of trails for areas that are sensitives to certain species during certain time periods or during times when trails are susceptible to damage.
- Adopt or develop a mobile App for trails that incorporates key trail information ahead of time to know what trails might be closed for some reason and to help in education.
- Enforcement is needed but should not be the first action taken. Enforcement should be considered as a last resort for worst offenders.
- Develop a guardian/stewardship trail patrol to promote responsible skills and ethics.
- Recognizing the CRD is focused first on compliance through education, review the CRD parks bylaw to ensure it enables enforcement of undesirable behaviours.
- Ensure regular maintenance of trails which is a greater priority than enforcement.
- Incentivize mountain bike clubs by:
  - Having a clear approvals process.
  - Creating work parties to bring in rogue builders
  - SIMBS is now building a positive trail-building reputation with other user groups
  - Having trail builders come to
  - do talks and create a long-term education process

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**Question #2**

**6.2 What are the criteria that should be used to determine which existing authorized and unauthorized trails are appropriate to permit sanctioned mountain biking and provide a desired mountain biking experience?**

- a) The MBAC discussed the merits of recommending that mountain biking should be considered in any parks and on any trails where hiking is currently permitted. It was agreed that this general recommendation should not be made and that criteria should be used to enable the evaluation of each trail independently.

- b) The MBAC discussed what criteria should be used and generated the following ideas:
- Ensure the criteria language focuses on conditions for enabling rather than restricting.
  - Risk management and risk to CRD for injury and liability
  - How closely trail adheres to IMBA guidelines with consideration of local geology.
  - Level of existing use by other activities should be considered as to whether it might create overuse.
  - If precedence is considered, who is actually using the trail.
  - Interconnectivity / proximity of the trail to other riding areas and regional connections.
  - Provides quality mountain biking experience. Contributes to addressing gaps in mountain bike experiences.
  - Provides climb trail or access trail (note: they often make great downhill trails).
  - Trail will not create additional habitat fragmentation.
  - Popularity / level of use of the unauthorized trail.
  - Contribution the trail will make to the overall density of trails in the park.
  - Safety – extent that the trail will create visitor safety concerns.
  - Extent that the trail overlaps with sensitive ecosystems and important habitat.
  - Potential impacts to First Nations values.

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**Question #3**

**6.3 What, if any, existing design guideline manuals or documents should be adopted and implemented by the CRD to guide the planning and design of mountain bike trails and relative trail infrastructure (e.g. technical trail features):**

- a) The MBAC discussed what planning and design manuals the CRD currently use (IMBA Trail Solutions, Whistler Trail Standards, Parks Canada Trail Classification & Guidelines) as well as others that are available. The strengths and weaknesses of manuals used by the CRD were discussed.

b) MBAC discussed whether to recommend that the CRD adopt any other planning and design guidance manuals. The potential for adoption of manuals to create liability risk was raised. It was acknowledged that, in addition to the existence of the manuals, the CRD Board would be interested in what other manuals other regional and municipal governments in BC have adopted. The MBAC recommends that, in addition to the current manuals in use by staff, the CRD should also adopt the Bureau of Land Management Guide for a Quality Trail Experience and the e-MTB Land Manager Handbook. It was also noted that the IMBA website maintains up to date resources.

**ACTION ITEM** – A. Soraya to send the Whistler E-Bike Engagement Report to Chair Ellis to post on SharePoint.

C) The MBAC discussed whether there is a need for the CRD to develop their own trail planning, design, construction, and management manual. At this point, the MBAC did not see a need to do so.

D) The MBAC discussed the merits of recommending that the CRD create an ongoing standing committee to advise on and support the implementation of the guidelines. Mountain biking is becoming bigger, so it may be beneficial to have a standing committee which meets once a year to see if everything is on track, if there are challenges implementing the guidelines, evaluating communications between all the groups, outreach etc. There was agreement that if implementation of the recommendations in this report are deferred to park management plans, the MBAC will not be satisfied. The creation of an ongoing standing committee would be of benefit to ensure the mountain biking recommendations are implemented in a timely manner.

Jeff Leahy (Senior Manager Regional Parks), indicated that staffs expectation is that the Advisory Committee will build trust and show success by:

- Relationships being built at Advisory Committee
- Build trust with the public
- Show success with relationships with MTB clubs like SIMBs
- Find opportunities on the ground for trail building such as currently being done with SIMBs

In terms of the process:

- Guidelines will support management planning process
- Additional Mountain Bike areas can't just land within a regional park without a public process including First Nations consultation
- Need to be careful we aren't creating ad hoc public processes outside of a management planning process
- There are other recreational users out there that will be looking to an Advisory Committee process to resolve issues

The MBAC agreed that an ongoing standing committee should be recommended to support timely implementation of the guidelines.

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**7. Next Meeting**

The next MBAC meeting will be November 18, 2020.

**8. Adjournment:**

**MOVED TO adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m. by H. Prince; seconded by T. Fenwick.**

**CARRIED**