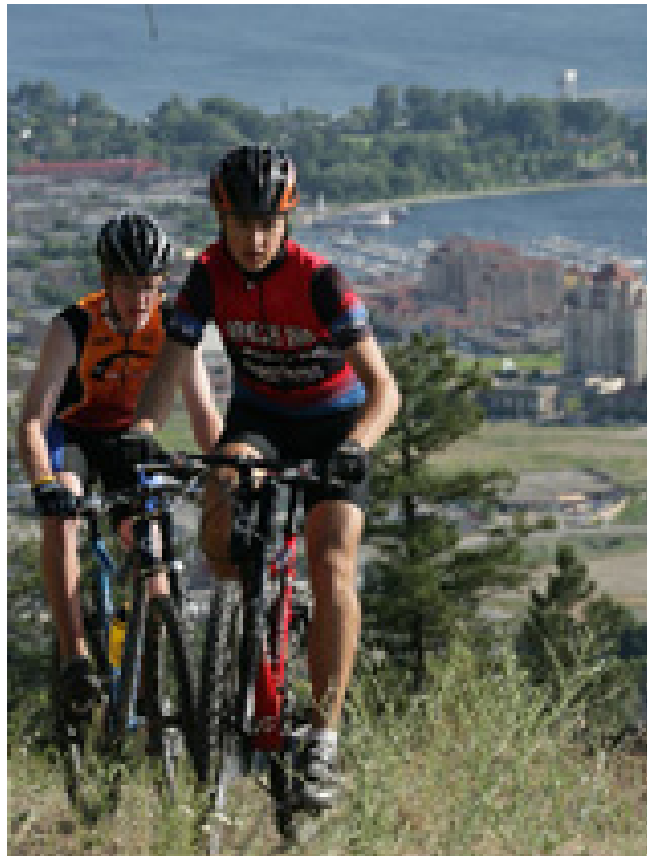




MOUNTAIN BIKE COMMUNITY PROFILE for the Central Okanagan



SEPTEMBER 2007

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Kelowna together with the Regional District of the Central Okanagan and BC Parks, are in the preliminary stages of developing a city-wide mountain bike strategy which will review the current and future mountain biking opportunities in the Central Okanagan area. The purpose of this Mountain Bike Community Profile, an initial step in preparation of the Mountain Bike Strategy, was to conduct research to determine the composition of the local mountain biking community, identify key issues relating to mountain biking, identify the demand for mountain bike facilities, and outline the role that local governments and the mountain bike community should play in the provision of mountain bike facilities. It should be recognized that additional research will be required in some areas.

Key issues for mountain bike facilities in the Central Okanagan have been identified as: development of new trails, maintenance and protection of existing trails, trail use conflicts, risk management, non-sanctioned trails, environmental impact, trail amenities and signage, planning and coordination of trails, and destination tourism. Descriptions of the key issues and solutions are identified within this report.

By gathering research on the demographics of the local mountain bike community, obtaining input from local mountain bikers, stakeholders and local governments, and interviewing other communities within British Columbia with mountain biking facilities the following recommendations should be considered:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

By gathering research on the demographics of the local mountain bike community, obtaining input from local mountain bikers, stakeholders and local governments, and interviewing other communities within British Columbia with mountain biking facilities the following recommendations should be considered:

1. The City of Kelowna, Regional District of Central Okanagan, and BC Parks should proceed with the development of a **Mountain Bike Strategy** including involvement from stakeholders, partners and the local mountain bike community.

A. The Mountain Bike Strategy should consider broadening to **include additional partners** such as:

-The District Municipality of the West Side. Many of the popular mountain biking areas identified in both the workshops and in the survey are currently within Regional District jurisdiction but will be incorporated within the boundaries of this new municipality.

-The Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts (MoTSA) as they control uses on Crown Lands.

-Other communities within the Regional District to determine if they wish to be involved in preparation of the Mountain Bike Strategy, i.e., Peachland and Lake Country.

B. The economic impact of mountain biking has been well documented in other B.C. communities and is significant. Research to quantify the **economic impact** of mountain biking in the Central Okanagan should be considered as part of the Mountain Bike Strategy. This research will assist local governments in the decision to provide future funding for mountain bike infrastructure and trail management. In this way, local residents will greatly benefit from enhanced infrastructure that has been developed as a result of mountain bike tourism.

C. The Mountain Bike Strategy should consider **Mountain bike facilities** for all levels of ability and provide for a natural progression of skill as riders mature and their interest changes. Research indicates that mountain biking appeals to a variety of age groups and a variety of disciplines (e.g. cross country, freeriding, downhill, etc.). However, increasing opportunities for active youth should be the initial focus.

D. The Mountain Bike Strategy should consider making recommendations regarding planning and developing a **sanctioned mountain bike trail network** that accomplishes many objectives at once, including sustainability and protection of large natural areas, promoting active communities, and providing facilities for all trail user groups (i.e. hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, etc.).

E. The Mountain Bike Strategy should consider making recommendations regarding planning and development of a **Technical Training Area** (Skills Park) including funding allocation, selecting and acquiring a suitable site, and working with a planning committee. The skills park should be developed with and for mountain bikers of all ages and include technical training features for beginner, intermediate and advanced riders. By planning and developing a technical training area in conjunction with local riders, which is centrally located in the community, there should be a reduction in “rogue” facilities being constructed.

F. In order to maintain existing mountain bike facilities and ensure future development of infrastructure the Mountain Bike Strategy should consider recommending a policy of **no net loss of trails** during the approval and permitting processes required for new developments. It is recognized that development will occur and that the existing unsanctioned trail network on private and crown lands may be reduced. Critical trails and off-road connections lost to development need to be relocated in close proximity to their previous locations by **ensuring that off-road trails are addressed in area structure plans** prepared by the developer. In addition, an **access agreement** with landowners, which outlines the responsibility of local government and the mountain bike community, should be considered for implementation.

G. The Mountain Bike Strategy should consider recommending inclusion of public participation in the planning, development and management of mountain bike facilities. A **Trail Coordination Committee** should be encouraged as a mechanism for local mountain bike club(s) and trail user groups, including equestrians and hikers, to be involved in planning and development of a trail network and contribute to trail management. The Trail Coordination Committee could consist of representation from all trail user groups, local government(s), stakeholders and land managers.

H. The Mountain Bike Strategy should consider recommending the creation of a position of a qualified **Trail Coordinator** to work with the Trail Coordination Committee and to be responsible for the day to day operation of trail planning, construction and maintenance of a trail network in the region. Joint funding of this position between the local government agencies involved in the Mountain Bike Strategy should be considered.

I. The Mountain Bike Strategy should consider the feasibility of developing a partnership with **Sport Kelowna** to assist in focusing on the economic development potential of mountain biking by promoting and conducting sanctioned events, tours, beginner level mountain bike workshops, etc.

J. Identifying and developing **partnership opportunities** with community organizations, businesses, agencies and others will be advantageous in enhancing and promoting mountain bike facilities and should therefore be considered.

K. Once mountain bike trails have been developed, and coordinated mapping and signage has been completed, **Kelowna Tourism** has indicated partnership opportunities are available to assist in creating a strategic advertising and marketing plan that promotes Destination Mountain biking in the region. Pursuit of this partnership opportunity is recommended.

L. It is recommended that local governments support the re-development of the **Kelowna Mountain Bike Club** to be the representative umbrella group for all mountain biking disciplines.

2. Kelowna Mountain Bike Club(s), Sport Kelowna, tour groups, bike retailers, and community organizations should consider coordinating and promoting a community **mountain bike event** (e.g., fat tire festival) to increase the awareness of mountain biking as a physical fitness activity for all ages, the levels of involvement in mountain biking, and change the public perception of who participates in mountain biking.

3. Partnerships with the **International Mountain Bike Association** (IMBA), the **Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association** (MBTA) and others should be considered to assist with providing a coordinated approach and sharing of resources in the development, management, and promotion of mountain bike facilities.

1.0 INTRODUCTION



1.1 Purpose of the Project

The area of Kelowna and the southern interior of B.C. provide scenic beauty, excellent weather and natural environments that create a fabulous quality of life. The extensive outdoor recreation opportunities serve to benefit the local residents and increasingly attracts destination tourists to the area. Growth in the area is increasing rapidly, with the population over the next ten years expected to exceed 25% growth. The challenge is to meet the ever-changing needs of a growing and vibrant community while maintaining the natural landscapes and attributes that help define the area.

Local government recognizes that mountain biking supports a healthy, active lifestyle. The City of Kelowna together with the Regional District of the Central Okanagan and BC Parks, are in the preliminary stages of developing a city-wide mountain bike strategy. The primary objective of the Mountain Bike Strategy is to review the current and future mountain biking opportunities in the area.

The purpose of this Mountain Bike Community Profile, an initial step in preparation of the Mountain Bike Strategy, was to conduct research to determine the composition of the mountain biking community including who mountain bikes, as well as where and in what form mountain biking takes place in the Central Okanagan area.

The primary objectives of the Mountain Bike Community Profile are as outlined:

- Conduct research to identify key issues related to mountain biking in the Kelowna area, and the southern interior of BC and identify examples of solutions developed to address those issues.
- Determine the size of the mountain biking community in relation to the size of other sports.
- Determine the demographics of the local mountain biking community including what age group(s) actively mountain bike; gender; where they live; where they mountain bike and how often; what level of skill should be catered to (i.e., novice versus extreme); what different types of mountain biking are pursued in the area. (Refer to Appendix A for definitions of types of mountain biking)
- Identify what kinds of facilities are in demand (i.e., single track off-road, skills training, destination tourism, staging areas connecting to crown land, etc.) and the gaps in provision of those facilities.
- Determine the expectations of the public regarding the role of local government.
- Determine strategies to empower the local mountain biking club(s).
- Identify possible partnership opportunities between the mountain biking community and the three levels of government for the design, construction, maintenance and monitoring of facilities.

1.2 Consultation

Consultation with the mountain biking community played a major role in the planning process. The following were the key components of the consultation process:

- An on-line mountain biking participant survey was hosted on the City of Kelowna website www.kelowna.ca for a period of two weeks. A copy of the survey and a detailed report of all survey responses is included in Appendix B.
- Four information gathering workshops were hosted to obtain input on key issues related to mountain biking in the Central Okanagan area. A summary of workshop discussions is included in Appendix C.
- Interviews with seven communities with mountain bike facilities were completed including: Merritt, Squamish, Surrey, Kamloops, Parksville, Capital Regional District and Rossland. Contact information and a summary of interviews is included in Appendix D.

Information obtained from the community workshops, participant surveys, and interviews with other communities with mountain biking facilities have been analyzed and summarized within the various sections of this report.

2.0 RESEARCH

2.1 Local Mountain Biking Community

A total of 651 legitimate survey responses were collected and analyzed from the mountain bike participant on-line survey. Due to the fact that this on-line survey did not allow for random sampling from a known population, it is not considered to be statistically valid. The following is a summary of responses and key findings based on the data collected.

Survey Respondents by Area

Respondent Areas	Frequency
Downtown Kelowna / Old Glenmore / Pandosy	136
South Kelowna / Mission	136
North Glenmore	101
Rutland	87
Westbank	40
Westside Road / Casa Loma / Lakeview Heights	37
Black Mountain / Joe Riche	23
South Okanagan	20
Winfield / Lake Country	15
Penticton	2
<i>Others (refer to Appendix B)</i>	39
<i>None Given</i>	2
Total	651

(Mountain Bike Participant Survey, 2007)

Responses and Summary:

1. Fewer females than males responded, which may reflect the participation ratio.
2. The two youngest age groups prefer downhill / free riding, but this activity becomes less attractive to the older cyclists, who prefer touring / pathways. It could be suggested from this that: "Young people (ages 24 and under) want to see what they can do. Older people (ages 55 and older) want to see where they can go."
3. Cross country / all mountain was the dominant type among mid-age groups (25-54 years old).
4. Kelowna's mountain bikers are very consistent about their chosen activity, with well over half of them cycling at least 1 or 2 times per week.
5. One of the main concerns identified is that many of the existing trails are located on private and crown land that may be subject to development pressure in the future. Loss prevention of these valued trails needs to be addressed through the planning process. The development of new trails and the maintenance of existing trails were also seen as main issues.
6. Those calling themselves 'advanced / competitive' and 'extreme' generally diminish as a percentage of each advancing age group, although they are even a minority in the youngest two age groups. The 'novice / beginner' levels actually increase somewhat with age levels, suggesting that many mid-to-older age adults are taking up the sport. The 'intermediate / recreational' segment is the largest, and increases in the older age groups.
7. Essentially identical rates of participation occur in the spring, summer and fall, and some cyclists even continue on through the winter.
8. Saturdays and Sundays are the most popular days for biking, in the evening and morning particularly. Many cyclists also show a willingness to bike during the week, especially in the evening. Weekday mornings are also quite popular.
9. 'Fun/Enjoyment' was the leading reason for participating in mountain biking, followed closely by 'Health/Fitness.'
10. Over 80% of respondents rate biking in Kelowna as good or very good.
11. A large majority of the respondents (76%) claim that they have mountain biked in areas outside of Kelowna at least a few times in the last year. A substantial number (6%) claim they did mountain bike outside the area 5 or more times per month.
12. Over 80% of the respondents felt that the provision of bike facilities was "important" or "very important." Less than 2% of the respondents felt it was "not important."
13. Regarding a willingness to pay for improved services, the largest number of responses came at the extreme ends of the continuum, i.e. "Not willing to pay a fee" and "More than \$40".
14. The predominant sources of information in Kelowna for mountain bikers (combining for 79% of responses) are word-of-mouth and local bike shops.
15. The majority of the respondents (460) reside within the Kelowna city limits (North Glenmore 101, Rutland 87, Downtown Kelowna/Old Glenmore/Pandosy 136, South Kelowna/Mission 136), followed by residents from the west side (87) with (Westbank 40, Westside Road/Casa Loma/Lakeview Heights 37).

Key Findings From The On-line Mountain Bike Survey:

1. The title of the survey, “City of Kelowna, Mountain Bike Community Profile”, may have unintentionally eliminated the participation of some bicyclists, particularly some older ones, who may take part in some of the activities mentioned herein (e.g. ‘urban / street’ and ‘touring / pathways’) but who do not consider themselves “mountain bikers.” This potential sub-population should not be overlooked as they have a major impact on the use of urban and destination trails.
2. There is a rather striking ‘age group’ effect among these respondents, suggesting that the mountain biking community is far from being homogeneous. There is a substantial difference in biking type preferences among the younger and older respondents, with the mid-age respondents bridging the gap. The political ramifications of this should not be overlooked.
3. The maintenance and protection of current trails and the construction of new ones should be kept as a primary objective.
4. The claimed high levels of participation and skill among these respondents suggest a dedicated population that is likely to voice their opinions readily. An on-going web site or e-mail address for getting continuous feedback from them may provide useful formative information as a well as an outlet for concerns and requests.

2.2 Importance of Mountain Bike Facilities

Recent statistically valid research by Ipsos Reid identified that citizens perceive Kelowna’s recreation and cultural opportunities favourably. Citizens value their parks, recreation and cultural opportunities, particularly those that allow them to be outdoors and with their family and friends.

Attitudes Towards Parks, Recreation, and Culture

Survey Response	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Total
Recreation and culture are an important part of quality of life	74%	22%	92%
I enjoy participating in activities that allow me to be outdoors and close to nature	69%	26%	95%
I would much rather participate in outdoor activities than indoor activities	54%	33%	87%
I am looking for recreation and cultural activities that allow me to participate with my family	45%	35%	80%

(Ipsos Reid, Demographics and Trends Research, July 2006)

When asked, “What types of parks, recreation and cultural facilities, if any, would you like to see more of in Kelowna?” Overall, 22% of citizens said they would like to see more “parks and green space” in Kelowna. Other types of facilities that citizens would like to see more of in Kelowna include **trails, paths, and walkways (11%)**, unspecified cultural facilities (9%), leisure facilities (9%), an Aquatic Centre, including water parks, water slides, and pools (8%), sports and recreation centres (6%), youth-oriented facilities and programs (6%), improvements to existing facilities (6%), family-oriented facilities and programs (5%), pet or dog parks (5%), and sports fields (5%). *(Ipsos Reid, Demographics and Trends Research, July 2006)*

2.3 Participation in Mountain Biking

Within the Central Okanagan area, residents have an opportunity to participate in a wide variety of recreational activities which contributes to the livability and “quality of life” in the region and promotes participation in regular physical activity. Regular physical activity improves health and well-being. It reduces stress, strengthens the heart and lungs, increases energy levels, helps you maintain and achieve a healthy body weight and it improves your outlook on life. Research shows that physical inactivity can cause premature death, chronic disease and disability. Health Canada encourages Canadians to integrate physical activity into their every day life. (*Health Canada*)

Today's youth are less active than ever before, and according to the U.S. Surgeon General, the percentage that is overweight has nearly tripled in the past two decades. Forecasts predict that the current generation of children in the United States could actually have a shorter life expectancy than their parents as the epidemic of childhood obesity continues. "Mountain biking is an activity that can help reverse the trend toward childhood obesity," says Hill Abell, president of IMBA. "Mountain biking is a great physical activity and the perfect way for adults and children to enjoy the outdoors and get some exercise together. Mountain biking builds self-confidence and offers kids and adults an adrenaline-packed adventure while giving them an effective, low-impact workout." (*www.imba.com*)

The Ipsos Reid report identified cycling/biking as the seventh highest ranked type of physical activity or exercise that residents of the City of Kelowna participate in on a regular basis. Fifty percent (50%) of residents surveyed walk on a regular basis; 17% participated in gym activities; 13% jog or run; 7% swim; 6% weight lift; 6% ski; while 5% of those surveyed rank cycling or biking as the form of exercise they participate in. Cycling/biking ranked above golfing, hockey, volleyball and martial arts. By combining walking (50%) and cycling/biking (5%) a total of 55% of survey respondents would enjoy using trails developed for multi-use. (Ipsos Reid, Demographics and Trends Research, July 2006)

The following table summarizes the type of physical activity that residents of the City of Kelowna participate in on a regular basis.

Types of Physical Activity

Survey Response	Percentage
Walking	50%
Gym	17%
Running (including jogging)	13%
Swimming	7%
Weight lifting	6%
Skiing	6%
Cycling / biking	5%
Golfing	4%
Hockey	4%
Volleyball	3%
Martial arts	3%
Yoga / pilates	2%
Soccer	2%
Various household / work tasks	2%
Basketball	2%
Aerobics	2%
Hiking	2%
Bowling	2%

(Ipsos Reid, Demographics and Trends Research, July 2006)

The Outdoor Industry Foundation, in the United States created *The Next Generation of Outdoor Participants* to gauge and understand the outdoor recreation participant and the impact on the long term trends of outdoor participation. The following table identifies the participation of mountain biking in comparison to other outdoor recreation activities among youth and young adults in the United States.

2006 Outdoor Participation Among American Youth and Young Adults

Outdoor Recreation	% of Population
Running/Jogging	25.8%
Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)	25.6%
Fishing (Freshwater/Other)	23.5%
Camping (Within ¼ Mile of Vehicle/Home)	21.6%
Hiking (Day)	14.1%
Skateboarding	12.4%
Camping (RV)	8.8%
Wildlife Viewing (More Than ¼ Mile From Home/Vehicle)	7.6%
Hunting (any type)	7.2%
Canoeing	5.9%
Fishing (Saltwater)	5.2%
Climbing (Sport/Indoor/Boulder)	4.6%
Backpacking Overnight (More Than ¼ Mile From Home/Vehicle)	4.4%
Bicycling (Mountain/Non-Paved Surface)	4.3%
Birdwatching (More Than ¼ Mile From Home/Vehicle)	2.9%
Trail Running	2.8%
Fishing (Fly)	2.8%
Kayaking (Recreational)	2.2%
Bicycling (BMX)	2.1%
Rafting	2.1%

(The Next Generation of Outdoor Participants, The Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2007)

2.4 Demand for Mountain Bike Facilities

Current Use of Mountain Bike Facilities

Respondents of the on-line mountain bike participant survey indicated that the top five mountain bike areas most regularly visited in the area include Knox Mountain (308 respondents), Myra-Bellevue / Crawford (287 respondents), Mission Greenway (258 respondents), Gillard (237 respondents) and Powers Creek (192 respondents).

Youth and adults who attended the community workshops were asked where they ride on a regular basis with the following responses:

Responses from Youth - Gillard, Knox Mountain, Silver Star, Powers Creek, Ben Lee Skate Park, Cox Road, (Lakeview Heights – Kalamoier Regional Park), Crawford, North Glenmore, Dilworth, Kettle Valley, Mission, Postill, Shannon Dirt Jump, DBP (Ditchin Bike Park), Star Place (Trepanier Road, Peachland), Fox Road (Westside near Sensisysten Community Centre) and Galaxy Road.

Responses from Adults - Gillard, Knox Mountain, Glenmore Highlands, Myra-Bellevue, Powers Creek, Smith Creek, Mission Greenway, Okanagan Mountain Park, Rose Valley

Demand for Mountain Bike Facilities in the Future

Respondents of the on-line mountain bike participant survey indicated that the type of mountain bike facilities needed include single track/off road (354 respondents), touring/pathways (314 respondents), downhill/free riding (308 respondents), and skills training/bike park (292 respondents). Clearly, the need for the development of additional mountain bike facilities for all types of riding has been identified by local mountain bikers.

Both youth and adults that attended the community workshops were asked “What type of mountain bike facilities are needed in the Central Okanagan area and ideally where should they be located?” The combined survey and workshop responses include:

Identification of Future Mountain Bike Facilities

Youth Responses	Adult Responses
Skills park (dirt jumps) Indoor foam pit Slope style course Downhill race course	Skills park for all levels Trails for entry level riders Long loop trails Cross country trails “Marquee” or signature trail Connecting trails with access through residential areas Epic trails

The three locations were identified by youth for a skills park included: Dilworth Mountain, Smith Creek on the West Side, or Crawford. The key criteria for the location of a mountain bike skills park is that it is located central to all areas of the Regional District and that the location be accessible and “not up a hill”. (E.g. the base of Dilworth Mountain).

Adult mountain bikers identified Crawford, Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park (Lost Lake & Flamingo Flats), Gillard, Glenmore Highlands, Smith Creek and McDougall Rim as future mountain biking facility sites.

2.5 Destination Tourism and Economic Impact of Mountain Biking

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), based in Denver, Colorado, graded British Columbia with an “A”, placing it first in the world for mountain biking facilities. (*IMBA Trail News, Autumn 2003*) The review stated that BC is a freeriding hub; provides abundant trails, clubs, and culture and is the ‘global superstar’ of mountain biking. The review went on to comment “Open any cycling magazine or view the latest crop of adrenaline, gravity-defying films and it’s easy to see that the focus of the mountain biking world remains squarely on British Columbia, Canada”. Additionally, British Columbia received special recognition from the annual report in the following categories:

- Best Freeriding Locations – first place ranking
- People’s Choice (Online Poll) – second place ranking (to Missouri)
- Best Overall Trails and Scenic Quality – third place ranking (to Idaho and Colorado)
- (*City of Kamloops, Management Plan, Kamloops Bike Park*)

British Columbia is well known for its unique and challenging mountain biking trails. While communities and tourism organizations acknowledge that mountain biking tourism generates economic activity, quantifiable data is needed to demonstrate the value of the trails, encourage investment in infrastructure, and establish appropriate trail management policies. To meet these objectives, the Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association (MBTA) has conducted a pilot study to measure the economic impact of mountain biking in the Sea to Sky Corridor which includes the communities of the North Shore (North

Vancouver and West Vancouver), Squamish, and Whistler. The trail systems of the North Shore, Squamish and Whistler, are estimated to have collectively generated \$10.3 million in spending from riders that live outside of the host community over the period from June 4 to September 17, 2006. (*Sea to Sky Mountain Bike Economic Study – Overall Results*)

One recent survey on mountain bike tourism, (*Green, 2003*) conducted on International Mountain Bike Association members, found that there were 10,000,000 (3% of total population 301,139,947) mountain bikers in the United States. Approximately 80% of those riders had taken a trip of at least one or more nights specifically to go mountain biking. Of the riders surveyed, 89% had been cross country riding, 23% had ridden freestyle and 18% had been down-hilling (overlap is due to mountain bikers participating in more than one style). The average trip length was 4.6 nights, of which 3.8 days were spent mountain biking (indicating that mountain biking was almost the exclusive activity). The average age was 38 years, and then average annual income was US \$75,000. Factors influencing the destination choice included reputation, variety / difficulty of terrain, number of trails and scenery. Over 30% of the survey respondents had visited Moab, Utah, the highest percentage of any mountain bike destination in the United States. (*Squamish Mountain Bike Management Plan, 2005*)

Peter Robinson, the Chief Executive Officer, Mountain Equipment Co-op, confirmed that although sales in camping gear and backpacking equipment are down, activities such as cycling, climbing and paddling are on the rise. Overall, the adventure industry is increasing at a rate of 11% per year. (*Squamish Mountain Bike Management Plan, 2005*)

BC Parks staff have indicated that the Myra-Bellevue Park and Kettle Valley trestle system is a major tourism destination, with participation estimated at 43,000 visitors this past year and 100,000 visitors forecasted to the area for 2008. Within the next ten years, approximately 250,000 visitors are expected to travel to this well known mountain bike tourist destination.

Research obtained for the Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture, Outdoor Recreation Program Business Plan (*Fay Baker, Consulting, 1999*) involved thirty-five private operators/outfitters completing an extensive questionnaire and personal interviews with ten outfitters in order to obtain specific information on outdoor programs, target markets, resources required to develop successful partnerships, and trends. The most significant trends identified by the operators/outfitters included the following:

- Participation in outdoor activities is increasing rapidly
- Increasing family participation
- Eco-tourism focus
- Respect for the environment, “clean, green and safe”
- Soft adventures for all age groups
- Learning and educational opportunities
- ‘Women’s only’ programs
- Active holidays, easy access wilderness adventures
- Overnight lodge stay or weekend retreats
- Multi-day trips to explore new locations

Adventure travelers are entry level adventurers learning new outdoor activities over the period of a few days. These travelers are well educated, affluent, fitness conscious and regard adventure as a learning experience. A study of adventure travelers in BC revealed that more strenuous, risky activities such as mountaineering, kayaking, river rafting, heli-skiing and scuba diving have more appeal to 20 – 34 year olds than older age groups. Activities such as cycling, cross-country skiing, heli-skiing, sailing and nature observation are more popular with people aged 35 – 54. (*Ecotourism Market Literature Review*)

Primary Purpose for Travelling Elsewhere to Mountain Bike

Local mountain bikers who attended the adult community workshop were asked the question: “*What is the primary purpose for travelling elsewhere to mountain bike?*” Responses included:

Mountain bikers....

- become bored with a finite number of local rides and travel elsewhere for new experiences
- like a variety of terrain and scenery to explore
- travel to race, to vacation, and experience epic riding
- like to explore extensive trail networks in new locations
- combine mountain biking with vacation travel

Best Practices Research

IMBA has provided research and best practices on the success of mountain biking tourism. The article, *Mountain Bike Tourism Success Stories* outlines how several communities around the world have prospered from mountain bike tourism. Six communities are identified that have international reputations for excellent bicycling. In addition, IMBA has prepared a list of common denominators that have helped these six areas prosper, *Destination Mountain Biking: Positioning Your Community for Mountain Bike Tourism*. These two articles along with articles, *15 Tips from IMBA on Developing Mountain Bike Tourism* and *Travel Patterns of Destination Mountain Bikers* are provided in the resource file.

The major factors that must be considered when positioning your community for mountain bike tourism include the following:

- Provide great maps that make it easy for visitors and show the best trails for mountain biking.
- Promote trails for riding levels that helps to establish the area as a first-rate mountain biking destination.
- Get the community involved by emphasizing the economic benefits.
- Help the community understand mountain biking.
- Showcase the land's natural beauty.
- Photograph bike trails professionally, for inclusion in mountain bike tourism brochures, magazines and websites.
- Encourage the media by providing exposure to cycling magazine editors.
- Promote construction of bike hotels – convenient lodging with cyclists in mind that are located near trailheads, and provide bike storage, and tour packages.
- Advertise other amenities in the area including restaurants and tourism activities
- Develop package offers that appeal to mountain bikers by combining lodging, meals, and bike shop services.
- Develop sustainable singletrack trails (design an interconnecting singletrack trail network)
- Design, produce and post accurate trail signs
- Support bike shops – bike shop staff are ambassadors for promoting mountain biking in the area (tourists usually ask local bike shops where to ride, lodge and eat).
- Quantify your success to ensure continued community buy-in and investment in infrastructure improvements. Track accurate readings of how the community is impacted, by examining sales tax, lodging and traffic counts. (www.imba.com) (Article: *Destination Mountain Biking: Positioning Your Community for Mountain Bike Tourism*).

Involvement with Tourism Kelowna

When mountain bike facilities are organized, trail maps are available, and good signage is provided, information should be included in Tourism Kelowna advertising and promotional materials. Once a “product” is ready, whether golf, mountain biking or wine tasting, it falls under the Kelowna brand and a partnership is developed. Tourism Kelowna would develop strategic advertising and a marketing plan for the promotion of mountain biking in the area. Tourism Kelowna and the Kelowna Mountain Bike Club

would become partners, pooling their resources and funding for general advertising, in addition to direct mail and “destination oriented” marketing. (*Nancy Cameron, Tourism Kelowna*)

Destination Tourism

The largest tourism-buying group is the British Columbia resident market. Almost 30% of all tourism traffic is generated from within the province. The main reasons for travelling within British Columbia include leisure vacations, visiting friends and relatives, and business. Being centrally located in the province, the Central Okanagan is positioned with an extensive mountain bike trail network, natural scenic beauty, accommodation, restaurants and bike shops/outfitters that could work with the tourism industry to develop a “world renowned” mountain bike destination.

Mountain bike festivals and race events encourage riders to travel to designated locations such as Moab (Fat Tire Festival), Fruita (Fat Tire Festival), Durango (Ironhorse Race and Fat Tire Festival), Rosland (Seven Summits Treasure Hunt), Whistler (Crankworx Mountain Bike Festival) and Squamish (Test of Metal Race). The economic impact of the Test of Metal resulted in nearly \$400,000 spent in Squamish by participants on the day of the event, by spectators at the event and pre-race training by participants. (*Sea to Sky Mountain Biking Economic Study – Overall Results*) A complete list of mountain bike races and events hosted throughout North America is provided in the resource file.

2.6 Role of Local Government

Participants who attended the community workshops and representatives from other communities interviewed were asked “What the role of local government should be in the provision of mountain bike facilities?” The combined workshop and interview responses include:

- Work with Planning and Development Services to include trail alignments within new developments prior to approvals and permitting, (i.e.: no net loss of trails due to development)
- Education and safety
- Liability and risk management
- Planning and trail development
- Monitoring and maintenance of trails
- Enforcement of mountain bike trail standards as well as bylaws and other regulations
- Environmental education
- Land for development of mountain bike trails
- Land acquisition and selection of suitable trail locations
- Assist in the re-development of the Kelowna Mountain Bike Club
- Recognition of volunteers
- Develop a mountain biking strategy and policies to base decisions on

2.7 Strategies to Empower the Local Mountain Bike Club(s)

The involvement of local mountain bike club(s) is critical to the success of expanding mountain bike facilities. By developing a partnership agreement between local governments and a mountain bike club, users are able to contribute to all aspects of trail management activities.

Role of Local Mountain Bike Club(s)

- Represent all mountain biking disciplines (i.e. cross country, downhill, freestyle, etc.)
- Provide “in kind” contributions to assist with maintenance of trails
- Promote safe mountain biking
- Assist with trail development and maintenance
- Coordinate trail building and maintenance training courses
- Provide input for trail etiquette and trail use guidelines

- Assist with enforcement of trail use procedures
- Coordinate group rides and mountain bike courses (ie: beginner's, women's)
- Coordinate and host mountain bike events
- Provide environmental education for mountain bike members and non-members
- Ensure mountain biking is environmentally responsible
- Provide feedback on planning of future mountain bike facilities
- Act as an "advisory committee" to the planning process
- Provide a voice for the sport of mountain biking - advocacy
- Assist in managing the expectations of the mountain biking community
- Access grants not typically available to government agencies
- Gain status as a non-profit society
- Report maintenance issues to appropriate government jurisdictions in a timely fashion

The Kamloops Bike Ranch Association Society has a formal Agreement between City of Kamloops and the KRBA. The Society and its members shall act as role models in the community in respect of the development, operation and promotion of the bike park.

The KRBA Society agrees to the following:

- Assist the City in the design and construction of the bike park, including all trails and features within the bike park, all under the direction and supervision of the City.
- Assist the City with the maintenance and operation of the bike park, all under the direction and supervision of the City.
- Coordinate volunteer participation for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the bike park.
- Report to the City any maintenance or repair issues as soon as they becomes aware, including any required maintenance of or repair to any fences, trails, signage, structures or buildings.
- Ensure that its members comply with the terms of the Leases, and in particular, ensure that no members ride outside the boundaries of the bike park, and that no members create features of any kind within the bike park without receiving the City's prior written approval.
- Host and/or co-host recreational, training and competitive events at the bike park, all under the direction and supervision of the City. (*City of Kamloops and Kamloops Bike Riders Association Management Agreement*)

2.8 Partnerships

Developing partnerships with community organizations, local business, agencies and others will be an integral component of expanding mountain bike facilities.

Kelowna Mountain Bike Club

In order to encourage volunteer involvement in the planning, development and management of mountain bike facilities, local government should support the re-development of the Kelowna Mountain Bike Club. With an active mountain bike club, many opportunities will be available to develop partnerships between the mountain biking community and the three levels of government for the design, construction, maintenance and monitoring of facilities.

Bike Shops/Retailers

Local mountain bikers and inbound tourists rely on local bike shops to provide maps of mountain bike trails, equipment, bike repairs and general information on the area (accommodation, restaurants, entertainment). Bike shops provide a social connection for riders by organizing evening group rides, training sessions, shuttle services and in sponsoring events. Good relationships and ongoing communication with local bike shops is necessary in an attempt to involve these key stakeholders in the future development of mountain bike facilities.

Tour Operators/Outfitters

Working with private tour operators both locally, provincially and internationally is important. Tour operators provide qualified instructors, quality equipment, instructional programs, and shuttle services. Responsible private operators are passionate about their field of expertise and this passion is evident in the ways they motivate program participants, promote safety and operate in a economically, environmentally and socially sustainable manner. Successful tour operators and outfitters maintain their position in the industry by keeping well informed of outdoor recreation trends and future directions.

Kelowna Cycling Coalition

A partnership with the Kelowna Cycling Coalition will highlight the use of linear parks for non-motorized transportation between neighborhoods, urban trail use as community connections, link transportation corridors, and promotes "going green".

Tourism Kelowna

Tourism Kelowna is structured to deliver Destination Sales and Marketing and Visitor Servicing to a number of customer types through the following distribution channels: direct sales and service; print communication and electronic communication. (www.tourismkelowna.com)

Sport Kelowna

Sport Kelowna is a community based partnership committed to supporting Kelowna's sports community through sport development, sport tourism and sport partnerships. There is a great opportunity for the Kelowna Mountain Bike Club to access the resources provided by Sport Kelowna such as Event Services and Organizational Development. Services include assisting sports groups in the bidding and hosting events and developing programs and resources that build organizational capacity and strengthen the sport community, therefore helping Kelowna to become a 'preferred sports and event destination'.

Private Sector

Many opportunities to partner with the private sector are available with the need for construction materials, equipment, and volunteer workers in the development of mountain bike facilities. Bike park facilities and amenities have been built with "in kind donations" in both Merritt and the Capital Regional District. The Merritt Bike Park was built on land provided by the City and local business provided \$30,000 "in kind donations" for construction materials and volunteer labour. Hartland Bike Park washrooms were built by the Construction Association of Victoria in 2003 as a community project involving a total of twenty-seven private sector businesses, who provided goods and services including plumbing, electrical, concrete, lumber and painting.

Service Clubs

Many opportunities to partner with service clubs are available to provide funds and volunteers to assist with the construction of mountain bike facilities. Bike parks have been developed in both Merritt and Kamloops with partial funding being provided by service clubs such as the Rotary Club.

International Mountain Biking Association - IMBA

The International Mountain Biking Association provides research, knowledge and expertise in all aspects of mountain biking in addition to hosting local training events such as the IMBA Trail Care Crew, Trail Building School. Utilizing the resources, research and expertise of IMBA, will assist local government, stakeholders and the mountain biking community to work in a cooperative and collaborative manner.

3.0 ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

Information obtained from the participant survey, community workshops and research of various communities with mountain biking facilities have been analyzed and the following key issues related to mountain biking have been identified:

3.1 Trail Use Conflicts

Conflicts on multiple-use trails have been described "as problems of success-an indication of the trail's popularity" (*Ryan, 1993*). With increasing participation in a variety of outdoor recreation activities, conflicts among trail users have become a major concern. Mountain bikers, hikers, equestrians all share access to single track trails throughout the Central Okanagan area. In addition, trail conflicts occur amongst non-motorized users and motorized vehicles including dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles.

Trail conflicts can occur among different user groups, among different users within the same user group, and as a result of factors not related to trail user activities at all. Conflict has been found to be related to activity style, focus of trip, expectations, attitudes toward and perceptions of the environment, level of tolerance for others, and different norms held by different users. (*www.imba.com*)

Solutions:

Conflicts on Multiple-Use Trails (12 Principles for Minimizing Conflicts on Multiple-Use Trails)

The U.S. National Recreational Trails Advisory Committee identified trail-user conflicts on multiple-use trails as a major concern that needs resolution. The Committee asked the U.S. Federal Highway Administration to help identify ways to avoid and minimize multiple-use trail conflicts. A report entitled "Conflicts on Multiple – Use Trails" provides 12 principles for minimizing conflicts on multiple-use trails. Although this report is about conflicts on trails, it is intended to promote cooperation and understanding among trail users and to inspire ideas that will help reduce trail conflict. By adhering to the 12 principles should help improve sharing and cooperation on multi-use trails. (*www.imba.com*)

1. Recognize Conflict as Goal Interference
2. Provide Adequate Trail Opportunities
3. Minimize Number of Contacts in Problem Areas
4. Involve Users as Early as Possible
5. Understand User Needs
6. Identify the Actual Sources of Conflict
7. Work with Affected Users
8. Promote Trail Etiquette
9. Encourage Positive Interaction Among Different Users
10. Favor "Light-Handed Management"
11. Plan and Act Locally
12. Monitor Progress

Ways to Avoid or Minimize Conflicts on Multiple-Use Trails

A survey prepared by the U. S. Rails-To-Trails Conservancy identified ways to avoid or minimize conflicts on multiple-use trails. The following techniques are recommended to overcome conflict-related problems on their trails: signage, education, meeting with user groups, expanding facilities, police or ranger patrol, enforcement of regulations, brochure articles in newsletters or local newspapers, imposing speed limits, volunteer trail patrols, partial closing, bicycle bell give-aways. (*www.imba.com*)

User Group Involvement

The U.S. National Recreation Trails Advisory Committee's report on Conflicts on Multiple-use Trails indicates that by actively involving users in trail planning, management, and conflict resolution, they are compelled to work together and, as a result, can begin to better understand and appreciate one another's needs, expectations, and perspectives. Trail advocates, planners, and managers should attempt to work with unaffiliated individual users and/or with organized user groups before resorting to obtrusive regulations or trail closures. There are many compelling reasons to involve trail users in trail planning and management. Most important, involving users does the following:

- Gives different users the opportunity to learn about and work with one another.
- Gives different users the opportunity to understand one another's needs and see their similarities with one another.
- Builds understanding, cooperation, and trust through working together.
- Gives trail advocates, planners, and managers an efficient channel to learn from users and communicate with them. (*www.imba.com*)

By involving the various trail users i.e.: mountain bikers, hikers, equestrians, all-terrain vehicles in trail planning, managing and conflict resolution they gain a better understanding of each others usage of trails. For example, the District of Squamish facilitates discussions with organized user groups which are represented at an "all users" committee to identify solutions to conflicts or disputes amongst trail users.

Notification of Designated Trail Use

In some locations it may be necessary to designate trail use to specific user groups that are more appropriate than others E.g.: conflict between mountain bikers, hikers, equestrians and all-terrain vehicle users. It is important to ensure adequate signage is located at trail heads in order to inform users of appropriate use of trails.

Identify Motorized and Non-motorized Use Areas

Establish and identify trails that have been specifically defined for either motorized or non-motorized use and ensure adequate signage is located at trail heads in order to inform users of appropriate use. By establishing motorized and non-motorized use areas and providing appropriate notification and signage at trail heads identifying the use may assist in reducing trail use conflicts. It may be, given the distance motorized vehicles can travel in a short time frame and the land base that would be necessary, that separate use trails are more appropriate outside of the city limits on Crown Lands, where they would also be further removed from populated areas (i.e. noise).

3.2 Non-sanctioned Trails

With the increasing popularity of free-riding and dirt jumping, mountain biking enthusiasts are building informal or “rogue” facilities on government land and private property. These facilities are not built to any construction standard, and lack regular maintenance or monitoring, creating risks for users and liability for property owners. When mountain bike facilities are not properly constructed, erosion of steep slopes and water drainage become major issues. It is essential that all trail builders are qualified and follow design and construction standards prepared by the International Mountain Biking Association (www.imba.com)

The International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) guide *Trail Solutions: IMBA's Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack (2004)* provides an invaluable guide to trail construction techniques and drainage solutions for trail builders. Based on frequency and intensity of use, mountain/dirt biking constitutes the highest potential for trail damage. Since cycling can be expected on almost any trail and since IMBA's guidelines are also applicable to hiking trails, they should be adopted as a comprehensive set of guidelines for trail construction. (*Sea to Sky Corridor Recreation Trail Strategy, Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts, 2007*)

Solutions:

Technical Training Area – TTA Skills Park

Provide a sanctioned technical training area (TTA) to reduce the use of unsanctioned areas. By providing an area for riders to practice their technical skills, the incidence of “renegade” riders looking for (or building) new challenges on or off existing trails will be reduced. (*South Island Mountain Bike Society, www.simbs.com*) By planning and developing a technical training area in conjunction with local riders, which is centrally located in the community, there should be a reduction in “rogue” facilities being constructed. Additional advantages of building a technical training area in a central location include: a) younger age groups like to be seen by others, b) availability of emergency first aid responders, c) families and community watching – leading to a greater understanding and support of the sport. (Some locations for a skills park suggested at the youth workshop include: the base of Dilworth Mountain, Crawford Estates, and Smith Creek.)

3.3 Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance

Throughout the Central Okanagan area, multi-use trails have been constructed by volunteers, organized clubs and individuals wanting to expand their options for riding. As mountain biking throughout BC expands, guidelines and standards for trail design and construction need to be adopted.

Trail Design and Construction

The *Sea to Sky Corridor Recreation Trail Strategy – Trail Design and Construction Guidelines* provide a good example of guidelines that must be adhered to in the planning and construction of trails. These guidelines include:

1) Minimize environmental impacts

- Avoid environmentally sensitive areas or features including wetlands and critical habitat areas.
- Avoid historic, cultural or archeological sites.
- Avoid sensitive plant communities.
- Avoid constructing trails parallel to watercourses within riparian areas. Trails should approach streams and creeks at right angles to minimize potential for erosion.

2) Resist erosion

- Avoid highly erodable, steep slopes prone to erosion.
- Plan trail grades to avoid fall lines and flat spots; utilize grade reversals.
- Ensure trails have “outslope” to direct water off the surface.
- Understand soils you are working with and construct accordingly.

3) Blend with existing environment

- Plan contours and “flow” appropriately for trail type and expected use.
- Utilize existing natural features where possible including view points, rock outcroppings, forest features.
- Plan trail networks to consider all users; easier trails located in proximity to trails

Solutions:

Trail Construction Standards

Follow the “Trail Construction Standards” that recommended for the construction of single track trails and technical trail features (TTF’s) which are outlined in the *Sea to Sky Corridor Recreation Trail Strategy, 2007*. Additional resources for trail construction standards are identified in: *Trail Solutions: IMBA’s Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack, 2004*.

Maintenance and Operational Guidelines

Develop appropriate maintenance and operations guidelines that are required to ensure that routine inspections are conducted on all mountain bike facilities. “Inspection frequency and maintenance needs will vary depending on the type of facility, the number of built or constructed features, the level of use, and the over all user numbers.” (*Surrey Bicycle Recreation Facilities Strategy, 2007*)

The City of Surrey, maintenance and inspection standards are adapted from the Canadian Standards Association publication, *Children’s Play Spaces and Equipment* in addition to construction guidelines from the American Bicycling Association (ABA). Bike park facilities are treated similar to playground apparatus with detailed inspections completed a minimum of twice per year. The bike park inspections are the responsibility of a parks staff person who holds current Canadian Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) certification. (*Surrey Bicycle Recreation Facilities Strategy, 2007*)

The City of Kamloops, Bike Ranch is inspected by parks staff at least twice a week and detailed inspections occur twice a year. All City staff involved with inspecting the bike park have obtained International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) trail building qualifications.

3.4 Trail Amenities and Signage

Key issues identified by the Central Okanagan mountain bike community was the lack of consistent signage on all trails whether under the jurisdiction of the City of Kelowna, Regional District of Central Okanagan or BC Parks. Secondary issues included ancillary amenities located at mountain bike facilities such as parking lots, washrooms, bike wash and an air hose.

Solutions:

Consistent Signage

Develop consistent signage located at all mountain bike facilities in the Central Okanagan to ensure local mountain bikers and visitors will not find themselves lost and that features are clearly marked with appropriate level of difficult.

Entrance Signs providing trail users with information about the trail network including maps, degree of challenge, length of trail, trail rating, type of trail, emergency contact information and regulations.

Trailhead Signs that identify the trail name, technical difficulty, length of trail, type of user permitted on the trail, and warnings of Technical Trail Features (TTF's).

En Route Signs that indicate the specific technical difficulty ahead, name of trail and direction of travel and are often located at trail junctions.

TTF Warning Signs warn users of a technical trail feature of a higher difficulty than the overall trail rating. These post and marker signs displaying degree of difficulty of a technical trail features i.e. double black diamond, etc. (*Sea to Sky Corridor Recreation Trail Strategy, 2007*)



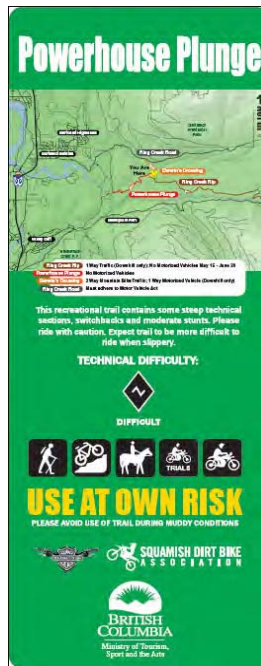
Trailhead Signs



Entrance and Trailhead Signs



En Route Sign



Trailhead Sign

(Sea to Sky Corridor Recreation Trail Strategy, 2007)



**Technical Difficulty Rating Signs
Merritt Bike Park**

Mountain Bike Facility Amenities

Where appropriate, washroom facilities and vehicular parking should be accommodated. For example, the Capital Regional District, Hartland Bike Park has become a very popular destination riding location not only for the mountain biking terrain and technical training area, but also for the available parking, washrooms, information kiosks with maps, bike wash and air hose available for riders at staging areas.



Hartland Bike Park Amenities
Washrooms, map, bike wash, air hose

3.5 Risk Management

Risk management and safety are major concerns for local government agencies responsible for mountain biking facilities. The term 'risk' as it applies to trail management has two meanings. The first describes the relationship of the trail user to the risks (both perceived and real) of travelling in an uncontrolled environment. The second and perhaps more important meaning in trails management are the risks incurred by land managers (and private land owners) of providing access to recreational trails for a variety of uses (*Keen, 2006*). The practice of risk management does not intend to eliminate risks, but instead to identify, reduce and manage them in order to decrease both risk to the user and potential liability to land managers and/or partners. (*Sea to Sky Corridor Recreation Trail Strategy, 2007*)

The potential for injury especially with the increased popularity of free-ride mountain biking has brought this issue to the forefront. The development of trails that include natural and man-made features (technical trail features – TTF's) create an exciting experience for the rider but are of great concern to government agencies.

Free ride mountain biking is intrinsically linked to the perception of risk involved in the experience. While riders do not intend to injure themselves it is the challenge of overcoming the risks that make the experience enjoyable. The reduction or elimination of perceived risks to the user, particularly in the case of mountain bike trails, is counter productive to the purpose of the trail itself. Risk management therefore, should focus on eliminating unreasonable 'hazards' from the trail (including unsafe or unsound TTF's) and proactively reducing the exposure of land managers, partners or private land owners to liability arising out of lawsuits. (*Sea to Sky Corridor Recreation Trail Strategy, 2007*)

The International Mountain Bicycling Association has developed a strategy for managing risk associated with freeriding. This strategy has been incorporated into the following steps to make mountain bike networks “reasonably safe”.

Follow best practices that are used for trail construction and maintenance:

- Ensure knowledge of trends and standards in trail maintenance,
- Determine shared use or single use,
- Provide trails, features and facilities for skill development,
- Place technical features appropriately,
- Use trail filters as a gateway or qualifier
- Provide optional lines or alternative routes,
- Provide adequate fall zones, and
- Follow construction guidelines, and best environmental practices.

Adopting a risk management strategy that includes:

- Designating a risk management coordinator,
- Regular inspection of trails, structures and facilities,
- Up to date, visible, effective and consistent signage system,
- Adoption of educational signage, including a code of conduct for trail users,
- Adoption of trail standards, with a consistent trail rating system, and with consistent trail conditions over time,
- Documentation of inspection and trail maintenance activities,
- Understanding local liability laws, and related case law, and
- Building partnerships and creating a forum for communication.
(Squamish Mountain Bike Management Plan, 2005)

Solutions:

Risk Management Strategy

Develop risk management strategies that outline a framework to reduce the exposure to liability. Communities such as Kamloops, Surrey and Squamish have implemented well planned risk management strategies.

Trail Design and Standards

Ensure the development and implementation of mountain bike trail standards in regards to signage and technical trail features. It is necessary to design trails and trail features that follow the industry standards in order to maximize rider safety.

Technical Training Area

Providing a technical training area increases rider safety. More and more riders are looking for greater technical challenges (particularly of the “North Shore” and “Freeriding” style). Providing riders with a technical training area, gives novice riders a place they can learn and practice skills. By providing skill-graded obstacles, riders can gradually build skills rather than finding themselves in dangerous situations on the trails. It is important to locate a technical training area close to a trail staging area, or in a central location with easy access. Should any accidents occur, injured riders will be close to the parking lot making transport/extraction much easier for emergency response teams. (www.simbs.com)

Signage

Signs are a critical component of a coordinated trail strategy. Signs ensure users have the information they need to make informed choices about their recreation experience. Adequate and informative signage also constitutes a necessary component of a comprehensive risk management program. By clearly explaining risk associated with a trail and adequately marking those risks on the trail, managers minimize their exposure to potential liability. (*Sea to Sky Corridor Recreation Trail Strategy, 2007*)

Emergency Response Plan

Implement emergency response procedures that are well planned in conjunction with emergency services. For example: the City of Kamloops Bike Ranch has emergency response locations identified in the bike park. Each sign has ambulance access points and emergency response procedures associated. The Capital Regional District has developed an emergency plan and located an emergency phone at the trailhead of the Hartland Bike Park.

Mountain biking has “risks” associated with the activity as riders are travelling in an uncontrolled environment. With the number of mountain bikers increasing and free riding gaining popularity, there may be an increase in the number of incidents of various types of injuries. It is important to work with local health authorities to record the impact on the emergency room and coordinate emergency planning. Parallels may be drawn with skiing and snowboarding and how injuries from these sports impact health service providers.



Emergency Response Indicators
Kamloops Bike Ranch



Emergency Phone
Hartland Bike Park

Liability Insurance

Liability insurance for mountain bike clubs has recently become available from some insurance providers. Available policies can insure clubs for liability arising from events like club rides, trail maintenance, trail patrols and other club activities. It can also provide coverage for completed operations, which means that if a club builds a trail and is subsequently sued by a trail user on the basis of that trail building, the policy will cover defense of the suit (*McKay, 2006*).

Merritt - The Merritt Mountain Bike Association, which is a registered society, has \$2 million general liability. The City of Merritt provides liability coverage for the bike park as it is a designated city park. The

Merritt Mountain Bike Association has purchased Director's and Officer's insurance coverage for a fee of \$800.00/year. Race insurance for special events is purchased through Cycling BC.

Capital Regional District - The licensed agreement with the South Island Mountain Bike Society and the Regional District outlines contractual arrangements. SIMBS is required to be responsible for the Hartland Bike Park at all times as the "license holder" and have not less than \$5 million liability insurance.

Parksville - The Arrowsmith Mountain Bike Club has insurance provided by Cycling BC. The club dues of \$30.00 per year, covers the cost of insurance for members while participating in club activities. In addition the mountain bike club purchases Director's and Officer's insurance coverage.

Kamloops - The Kamloops Bike Riders Association (KBRA) is covered under the City of Kamloops insurance. The city's coverage is \$35 million insurance with a \$250,000 deductible. In order to host mountain biking events the KBRA has not less than \$5 million insurance with the City named as additional insured. The KBRA, IMBA and MoTSA are in the process of developing a Provincial Mountain Bike Strategy and will determine insurance requirements for local mountain bike clubs.

Squamish - The District of Squamish is insured through the Municipal Insurance Association of BC along with the Squamish Lillooet Regional District. The District of Squamish carries liability insurance coverage of \$35 million.

Surrey - The Surrey Off Road Cycling Enthusiasts, SORCE is responsible for obtaining third party liability insurance of \$5 million, with the City named as additional insured.

Rosland - The Kootenay Columbia Trails Society covers landowners and board members for general liability, plus volunteers for accidents while working on trails. It is important that the insurance covers the private and corporate land owners, which sign an "access agreement" with the Society.

3.6 Environmental Impact

With the increased popularity of mountain biking, trail networks have been developed that do not necessarily consider the effect on erosion and impact on the environment. It is necessary that planned trails are designed, constructed and maintained to protect the integrity of the natural environment. Enforcement of appropriate use of trails and education on the etiquette of multi-use will need to be addressed as the volume of users increases.

Solutions:

Develop Technical Training Area

Providing a technical training area reduces the total number of on-trail riding hours, thereby reducing stress on all of the existing trails. (www.simbs.com)

Maintain Existing Mountain Bike Trails

Encourage the use of existing sanctioned trails to limit the impacts on the environment. Rehabilitate currently disturbed areas / rogue trails to their natural condition.

Education

Educate mountain bikers and other trail users on the importance of environmental stewardship. Partner with agencies, educational institutions and user groups to plan environmental initiatives, trail maintenance days and environmental awareness events.

Other Trail Users

When there are multiple users such as hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers and motorized vehicle riders (ATV's and dirt bikers), there is more impact on the environment. It is necessary to involve the Okanagan Trail Riders Association, the Kelowna Mountain Bike Club, the Back Country Horsemen, the Friends of South Slope, the Okanagan Naturalists Club and other stakeholders, as applicable, to review the heavy use impact on the local environment.

Adjacent Landowners

Encourage involvement of and communication with adjacent land owners to ensure their commitment to providing access on private land continues and that land is available for development of future mountain bike trails.

3.7 Planning and Coordination

The objective of developing a Mountain Biking Strategy is to involve the three levels of government (City of Kelowna, Regional District of Central Okanagan and BC Parks) in looking at current and future mountain biking opportunities for the Central Okanagan. A planned approach is necessary when involving various levels of government, the mountain biking community, volunteers, user groups and stakeholders in future trail development, construction and management of mountain bike facilities.

Solutions:

Trail Development Coordinator

Create a staff position for a Trails Coordinator that is shared by the City of Kelowna Parks Division, the District Municipality of the West Side and the Regional District of Central Okanagan, (e.g. Squamish, Kamloops, and Rossland.) This position would be responsible for liaison and communication with all three levels of government, key stakeholders, mountain bike club(s), other trail user groups, bike shops, event organizers, the International Mountain Bike Association, coordinating grant applications, managing mountain biking facilities, and coordinating volunteer participation. This person should have IMBA certification; be a skilled communicator; understand mountain biking; have experience in GPS (global positioning system) and GIS (geographic information systems, i.e., ESRI's ArcInfo software); and have post secondary education in a tourism, outdoor recreation and/or planning discipline.

Re-development of the Kelowna Mountain Bike Club

Redevelopment of the Kelowna Mountain Bike Club as a major volunteer base is required for development, construction and maintenance of the trails and skills park. In addition an active club could provide programs and mountain bike events for all levels of riding from beginner to elite level competition.

Involvement of Other User Groups

As the majority of mountain bike trails are designated "multi-use" it is necessary to involve other user groups such as equestrians, hikers and motorized vehicles. Communication between key stakeholders and trail user groups (various levels of government, land owners, Okanagan Trail Riders Association, Friends of South Slope, equestrian, hiking and biking clubs, and environmental groups) must be facilitated on a regular basis to build consensus. For example, in Kamloops, the Trail Stewards Group is a committee representing mountain bikers, hikers, equestrians, land developers and businesses that have an interest in planning and developing future mountain biking facilities.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

By gathering research on the demographics of the local mountain bike community, obtaining input from local mountain bikers, stakeholders and local governments, and interviewing other communities within British Columbia with mountain biking facilities the following recommendations should be considered:

1. The City of Kelowna, Regional District of Central Okanagan, and BC Parks should proceed with the development of a **Mountain Bike Strategy** including involvement from stakeholders, partners and the local mountain bike community.

A. The Mountain Bike Strategy should consider broadening to **include additional partners** such as:

-The District Municipality of the West Side. Many of the popular mountain biking areas identified in both the workshops and in the survey are currently within Regional District jurisdiction but will be incorporated within the boundaries of this new municipality.

-The Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts (MoTSA) as they control uses on Crown Lands.

-Other communities within the Regional District to determine if they wish to be involved in preparation of the Mountain Bike Strategy, i.e., Peachland and Lake Country.

B. The economic impact of mountain biking has been well documented in other B.C. communities and is significant. Research to quantify the **economic impact** of mountain biking in the Central Okanagan should be considered as part of the Mountain Bike Strategy. This research will assist local governments in the decision to provide future funding for mountain bike infrastructure and trail management. In this way, local residents will greatly benefit from enhanced infrastructure that has been developed as a result of mountain bike tourism.

C. The Mountain Bike Strategy should consider **Mountain bike facilities** for all levels of ability and provide for a natural progression of skill as riders mature and their interest changes. Research indicates that mountain biking appeals to a variety of age groups and a variety of disciplines (e.g. cross country, freeriding, downhill, etc.). However, increasing opportunities for active youth should be the initial focus.

D. The Mountain Bike Strategy should consider making recommendations regarding planning and developing a **sanctioned mountain bike trail network** that accomplishes many objectives at once, including sustainability and protection of large natural areas, promoting active communities, and providing facilities for all trail user groups (i.e. hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, etc.).

E. The Mountain Bike Strategy should consider making recommendations regarding planning and development of a **Technical Training Area** (Skills Park) including funding allocation, selecting and acquiring a suitable site, and working with a planning committee. The skills park should be developed with and for mountain bikers of all ages and include technical training features for beginner, intermediate and advanced riders. By planning and developing a technical training area in conjunction with local riders, which is centrally located in the community, there should be a reduction in "rogue" facilities being constructed.

F. In order to maintain existing mountain bike facilities and ensure future development of infrastructure the Mountain Bike Strategy should consider recommending a policy of **no net loss of trails** during the approval and permitting processes required for new developments. It is recognized that development will occur and that the existing unsanctioned trail network on private and crown lands may be reduced. Critical trails and off-road connections lost to development

need to be relocated in close proximity to their previous locations by **ensuring that off-road trails are addressed in area structure plans** prepared by the developer. In addition, an **access agreement** with landowners, which outlines the responsibility of local government and the mountain bike community, should be considered for implementation.

G. The Mountain Bike Strategy should consider recommending inclusion of public participation in the planning, development and management of mountain bike facilities. A **Trail Coordination Committee** should be encouraged as a mechanism for local mountain bike club(s) and trail user groups, including equestrians and hikers, to be involved in planning and development of a trail network and contribute to trail management. The Trail Coordination Committee could consist of representation from all trail user groups, local government(s), stakeholders and land managers.

H. The Mountain Bike Strategy should consider recommending the creation of a position of a qualified **Trail Coordinator** to work with the Trail Coordination Committee and to be responsible for the day to day operation of trail planning, construction and maintenance of a trail network in the region. Joint funding of this position between the local government agencies involved in the Mountain Bike Strategy should be considered.

I. The Mountain Bike Strategy should consider the feasibility of developing a partnership with **Sport Kelowna** to assist in focusing on the economic development potential of mountain biking by promoting and conducting sanctioned events, tours, beginner level mountain bike workshops, etc.

J. Identifying and developing **partnership opportunities** with community organizations, businesses, agencies and others will be advantageous in enhancing and promoting mountain bike facilities and should therefore be considered.

K. Once mountain bike trails have been developed, and coordinated mapping and signage has been completed, **Kelowna Tourism** has indicated partnership opportunities are available to assist in creating a strategic advertising and marketing plan that promotes Destination Mountain biking in the region. Pursuit of this partnership opportunity is recommended.

L. It is recommended that local governments support the re-development of the **Kelowna Mountain Bike Club** to be the representative umbrella group for all mountain biking disciplines.

2. Kelowna Mountain Bike Club(s), Sport Kelowna, tour groups, bike retailers, and community organizations should consider coordinating and promoting a community **mountain bike event** (e.g., fat tire festival) to increase the awareness of mountain biking as a physical fitness activity for all ages, the levels of involvement in mountain biking, and change the public perception of who participates in mountain biking.

3. Partnerships with the **International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA)**, the **Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association (MBTA)** and others should be considered to assist with providing a coordinated approach and sharing of resources in the development, management, and promotion of mountain bike facilities.

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