

MOUNTAIN BIKERS OF SANTA CRUZ
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February, 25, 2009

Chet Bardo, District Superintendent
Santa Cruz District, California State Parks
303 Big Trees Park Road
Felton, CA 95018-9660

Dear Superintendent Bardo,

The mountain biking community requests an open dialog with you about the increased enforcement action in Henry Cowell State Park and our past requests for additional access to the parks in the Santa Cruz District. We invite you to choose the time and place for the open dialog but we request that you meet with us in a timely manner and where the community can reasonably attend. I anticipate that we will have 100-200 cyclists attending based on the responses I have received since the notice of enforcement program started. Mountain Bikers of Santa Cruz (MBOSC) is willing to rent a venue to hold the meeting.

Mountain bikers in Santa Cruz County have enjoyed the trails in the local district since the inception of the sport in the late 1970's. Santa Cruz County is a mecca for mountain biking and is home to some of the leading mountain bike and component companies in the world. The sport is an important economic activity in the county. Mountain biking employs many local residents and brings in riders from all over the state and internationally to bolster the local tourism economy.

MBOSC was created in 1997 to help with the purchase and stewardship of the Gray Whale property that was added to the Wilder Ranch State Park unit. For many years after the acquisition, MBOSC was working with former Superintendent David Vincent to get the Gray Whale trails opened to the public. Due to staff turnover, this initiative has disappeared into a black hole since there are no champions within the district who are willing to take on this project.

A few years ago MBOSC worked with IMBA California and developed a trail conversion proposal that asks for an objective consideration of converting existing limited use trails to multi-use in several local parks. We presented this proposal to Superintendent Vincent in November of 2006. We have had numerous phone calls and meetings with successive Superintendents and DPR staff and we feel that very little progress has been made at the local district in all these years.

The sport has grown considerably over the past couple of decades yet there has been no appreciable expansion of legitimate trail riding opportunities in our local parks. The growth and popularity of the sport coupled with the expansion of public land and lack of DPR resources has contributed to a situation in which unauthorized trails have proliferated. The circumstances surrounding the recent enforcement program at Henry

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Cowell State Park has been understandable. The enforcement actions have energized the mountain biking community to become more engaged in land management decisions.

The mountain biking community is frustrated trying to use legitimate channels for gaining access to our public parks. We feel that nothing has happened to increase access in this district since the UConn trail opened in 1999. We were really disappointed to know that decisions were made to favor enforcement over access when addressing mountain bikers by staffing Ranger positions rather than a Trail Coordinator and Resource Ecologist. Mountain bikers are constituents and taxpayers and we should be allowed to enjoy our public resources in a manner that is consistent with the mission of the DPR.

We recognize the fiscal situation facing the DPR and the State and we are willing to become partners. We can offer our trail building expertise, labor and will raise funds to pay for the hard costs. We can create sustainable trails that are ecologically feasible, enjoyable and safe for all users. We are willing to negotiate for shared access to trails to mitigate the concerns of other trail users.

We would appreciate your attention to our request for an open dialog and I will be following up this letter by phone and email.

Sincerely,

Mark S Davidson
President, Mountain Bikers of Santa Cruz

cc: Ted Jackson
Ruth Coleman
Tom Ward