

From: [Bob Mittelstaedt](#)
To: [Board Comment](#)
Subject: Public comment for 11/6 meeting, off-agenda
Date: Tuesday, November 5, 2024 4:40:07 PM

I'm unable to attend tomorrow night's board meeting. But please consider this comment.

Having been at this for six years, from the first public workshop in December 2018, I'd like to offer my perspective on the latest chapter in MCL's attempt to obstruct the multi-use trail approach and access for electric mountain bikes -- the ones ridden mostly by older adults and those with disabilities.

The E-bike Community Advisory Group was formed in 2019. I had high hopes for a good faith working partnership with MCL and the other members. We all solemnly pledged to abide by the charter's admonition to propose good faith compromises rather than just saying no. Our friends from MCL, however, did not keep their promise. While a majority of CAC members favored ebikes, MCL said no -- with no alternative or compromise.

We then embarked on three years of a recreation planning process. Everyone was given multiple opportunities to express their views. We heard all sorts of claims from MCL about newts, battery fires, etc.

What we didn't hear was the claim that bats might get irritated if they nested too close to a fire road. That was saved for the 11th hour, and the litigation.

Even then, the court's tentative decision last Friday saw right through the environmental claims. As the court noted, Northern Spotted Owl populations are stable despite the presence of ebikes and other bicycles. The one bat study they've cited is full of flaws and not peer reviewed. With the presence of e-bikes on fire roads for many years now, if there are nearby bat colonies, it shows that they are not bothered by e-bikes. If they have moved elsewhere, it shows that they are resilient. As the court said, the showing of any harm is "very modest" with the court emphasizing the "very."

A reasonable person might read that to suggest that MCL reconsider its intransigence and opposition. That's not going to happen of course. But one thing is clear from the lawsuit and their conduct over the last six years. While they say they are a good collaborative partner, their actions speak louder. Put simply, they don't want to share their hiking trails and they still refuse to propose or support any alternative.

Over 70 years ago, when I resisted sharing toys with my sisters, my mom would threaten to take away the toys and give them to my sisters permanently. That approach usually had its intended effect.

I wonder if that's an option here. The surveys showed that most hikers have no problem sharing trails. Our experience on the GGNRA and county open space multi-use trails shows the same. But if this vocal minority is unwilling to share even the 10% of trails at issue, perhaps some trails should be used solely for bikes. It would be one thing if they favored separate trails for bikes. But it's apparent that they just want to preserve their exclusive entitled status.

The truth is that multi-use trails do work if we let them. The list of successful multi-use trails on the GGNRA and elsewhere is long. To name a few, Julian, Old Springs, Miwok, Middle Green Gulch, Coast View, (also sometimes incorrectly called Coastal), Dias Ridge, Bob Middagh, Val Vista, Windy Ridge, Porcupine, Wagon Wheel, White Hill, Bills', Boulder Springs, Contour, Candelero, Willis Evans, Hunt Camp, 680, Big Rock, China Camp, etc.

There's no reason they can't work here too.

I end by noting that MCL's efforts to use litigation to block e-bikes on the GGNRA have failed. The outcome here should be the same. It's just a matter of time and how much money it will cost the ratepayers. It might be good for the lawyers and MCL's fundraising. But it's a big net loss for Marin. And we know who is to blame.



Thank you. ww.ebikeaccess.org

From: [Bob Mittelstaedt](#)
To: [Board Comment](#)
Subject: Re: Public comment for 11/6 meeting, off-agenda
Date: Tuesday, November 5, 2024 4:51:56 PM

I meant to add one point. I took an informal, unscientific poll on Next Door, asking one question of hikers and equestrians who don't like sharing trails with bicycles: "What if anything should cyclists get? Bike-only trails, or nothing? 72% favored bike-only trails. https://link.edgepilot.com/s/e02785e2/2UKX8AsuX0_5JgOOKbcYCA?



[u=https://www.ebikeaccess.org/](https://www.ebikeaccess.org/)

On Tue, Nov 5, 2024 at 4:39 PM Bob Mittelstaedt <ramittelstaedt1010@gmail.com> wrote:

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