

From: [mary.oconnell](#)
To: [Board Comment](#)
Subject: Roads and Trails Management Plan
Date: Friday, April 10, 2026 2:58:20 PM

I am writing to give my input on the Watershed Recreation Management Plan.

At the community site walk in Feb, in Ranger Matt's historical recap of recreation on the Watershed, I recall that he said bikes were "banned" in the late 70s because of "accidents". He didn't offer specific data, but I bet he has it. That's a little different than the "restrictions" because of "conflicts" he said at the March 19 board meeting.

I walked with the group on the Mountain Top trail. You can see that the trail is already wide, having previously been a road, and that it needs work related to water drainage, so any additional work it needs for bikes might be operationally efficient. And that particular trail is a good alternative for bikes to avoid the road with car traffic, especially going uphill. Going downhill on the main road, it's easy to keep up with cars, so much less of an issue, and safer than bikes going down trails with hikers on them. So, the Mountain Top seems a good candidate for uphill bike traffic.

I know the trails quite well, and am hard pressed to think of many other trails that have similar characteristics as the Mountain Top. To the extent that you know of such trails, I think it's reasonable to have bike access on them, especially uphill. Otherwise, I think you are risking more accidents.

Here are a few points I would like to make, many of which have been well aired at all the meetings you've held:

- Safety - It's just not a reasonable expectation for bikers to yield to pedestrians on single track trails; there's just not enough room. And if a biker can't go around a hiker, their ability to slow, much less stop, is hindered by softer soiled trails, particularly on the downhill edge of the trail, and especially if the biker is headed downhill.
- Erosion - Several of the participants on the call claim that hikers and bikers have the same impact on trails. That just doesn't make any sense; of course heavy wheeled things traveling at faster speeds are harder on soil trails than feet. E bikes at 50+ lbs and faster speeds are even worse. They said that studies show no difference between foot and bike traffic, but I couldn't find any, other than something from the 1980s in the Appalachians. You don't have to do any studies. Just look at the single track trails that allow bikes in Annadel State Park where the trails are trashed. Or look at the Old Mine between Rock Springs and Pan Toll where deep bike tracks criss-cross the mountainside (even though bikes are not allowed). Or the bottom of the Kent and Collier Springs trails, also a favorite of illegal bike riders, which get reduced to total scree by bikers.
- Many of the comments supporting bike access claimed that it just wasn't fair that hikers get exclusive trail use on single tracks (~ 60 miles), while bikers have access to over 90 miles of dirt roads. There are 4 times as many hikers as bikers, according to your own report. And it's not a question of fairness, it's a matter of practicality.
- Suggestions that there could be schedules of even/odd days, or one way use, seem overly complicated, especially given current (low) enforcement, and doesn't address the erosion point. It's not a reasonable expectation that even more complicated rules would be followed or enforced better than they are now.
- Whatever the Water District decides to do about bikes' use of single track trails will certainly impact what happens in the State Park part of Mt. Tamalpais, where illegal biking is a problem now too.
- The suggestion that higher maintenance needs would be met by volunteers doesn't sound like a reliable plan, and admits that bike usage would increase maintenance needs.
- If the State and/or the County really want to spend some money, and improve access to more bikers, they might consider putting bike lanes on Rt 1 and the Panoramic Highway, at least on the uphill side. Most of the roads up and over the mountain have no shoulder, and it's really

dangerous for bikers and drivers. The only other way up or over the mountain is on the dirt trails, for which you need a mountain bike.

Mary O'Connell