



ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PARK DISTRICT

EBRPD aware of need for equitable, safe access to parkland

Transition to new General Manager, Sabrina Landreth

Staff considering pilot projects and education campaigns in various parks including Briones

TRAIL CONFLICTS

break down how people use the trails and what makes them like coming out to our parks and trails

Can you describe the issues?

District: Briones, etc: public safety action re. mountain biking

Emails from users, many equestrians throughout District

Increase in new users, many users trying to use trails at same time

Lack of appropriate warning from mountain bikers, many complaints

Much new signage and education; sent special enforcement to Briones, many citations

Thanks Captain Brede and Devan for mentioning the bike issues in Briones and elsewhere.

Is this rise in complaints due to an increase in actual conflicts on the trails or was there a call by equestrians to have people make complaints to the park district?

(As we know, Sierra Club and California Native Plant Society both put out a call to their members after the last TUWG to email the EBRPD with concerns about narrow trail use.)

There has been pent-up frustration

New user groups appearing on trails; damage, misbehavior, fireworks, etc.

District: There has been an increase in complaints during the pandemic, but the complaints have spiked since the TUWG was convened.

Not only complaints, but calls for more trails and more access.

MTB community is working with the district on implementing a bike bell station program as a component to educate and reduce conflict



TRAIL CONFLICTS (continued)

Request to define citations

Citations: district sets fine for violations; additional associated fees - can range from \$300-\$500 depending on jurisdiction

There are many conflicts; bulk of complaints from equestrian community

Enforcement based on reported incidents, have addressed many in Briones

Trail runner volunteer safety patrol alerted and educated

Question: how many citations are dismissed due to lack of information, etc.? What is actual conviction rate?

District: Tough question to answer, but this is why it's imperative to work w/operations and ASD to ID illegal trails

and to get out to provide enforcement; clear signage helps get conviction

The increase in complaints is in part due to reminders from equestrian groups to make the parks aware of any issues on the trails.

I think that with a citation that large without advertising and education programs in place has serious issues with equity,

particularly for new trail users that we should be WELCOMING to our parks

In the world of traffic engineering, we talk about the 3 "E"s.... Education, Engineering and Enforcement.... and that could apply to trails as well.

Was hiking in Shell Ridge last week. Lots of bikes on non-bike trails...

BUT there was no signage saying bikes not allowed.

The only way to know was to look at the trail map, hard to do while cycling.

For what it's worth, along the shoreline there is suddenly parking at the parks again -- apparently because schools are open?



TRAIL CONFLICTS (continued)

Can data on the citations be issued be supplied to the TUWG? Such as the offense being cited, the date, time, park?

District: Due to the increase in complaints in certain areas and the nature of the complaints, our police have been directed to take some action.

We realize that enforcement is just one part of the solution, but we perceived an unsafe situation in Briones that needed to be put in check.

Is there an increase in eBike conflicts and/or accidents?

There has been a long history of mountain bike use and user conflicts in Marin and in the Mid-Peninsula Open Space, and they have worked out many of these issues.

In my limited experience there, there is a higher public consciousness in both education (using bell, calling out) and many people calling out the rules to those who don't follow them.

(Sometimes crankily and unnecessarily IMO) Perhaps we could reach out to them for their experiences.

EQUESTRIAN'S PERSPECTIVES

PARK DISTRICT FRAMING

120 miles of paved trails, 200 miles unpaved which are main focus for this group

Horseback riding allowed on 114 miles - roughly 57% (twice as much as bicycles)

Many different equestrian facilities in parks

Certain parks designated as equestrian parks

Horseback riding requires a certain trail design

Horses are large, heavy and react to danger by running - big impact on trail



EQUESTRIAN'S PERSPECTIVES (continued)

PRESENTATION 1: Marie Grisham, Tri-Cities and California State Horsemen's Associations

Long-time horse owner and rider, state chari for trail rider's awards program

Track trail usage (by hours) throughout state, have database with info

Equestrian access to parks: can be challenging, entrances may not accommodate large trailers

Due to this, parks sometimes not as well used by equestrians as they might be

Often restricted or no parking for trailers, extra cost, lack of room to maneuver; signage lacking

Good news: designated parking being added at one park

Careful not to block cars; would appreciate same courtesy from car drivers!

Trail sharing solutions in other parks include: separate trails for equestrians and/or hikers

Shared equestrian hiker/trails that are wider with margins for riders

Marin Hills: Uphill trails for cyclists; trails designed to slow users down; no cyclists on narrow hazardous trails

Bells 4 Bikes - horses can hear from 1/4 mile or more; successful programs implemented throughout California

Bell boxes provided on trails

Joint trail user events - joint ride/hike/bike, discuss experiences; learn how to interact safely and courteously



EQUESTRIAN'S PERSPECTIVES (continued)

PRESENTATION 2: Elizabeth Hudson, EBRPD Volunteer Mounted Patrol, Walnut Creek Open Space Advocate, San Ramon Valley Horsemen's Assn

Enforcement and Trail Safety

Equestrians' expectations on the trail: in past - safe from vehicles, startling events, safe for children and novice riders

Space for all gaits; riding solo safely; friendly encounters with other trail users; wildlife sightings, ability to enjoy nature

Present-day realities: bikes / e-bikes on ALL trails even those signed "No Bikes"

Equestrians most likely to be injured

Bikes can spook horses, appear quickly, make it unsafe; line of sight crucial

Dangerous conditions, should ride with a partner

Verbal aggression, assaultive bike riding, etc.; wildlife avoids bike areas

Increased vigilance necessary

Multi-use trails require **CONSISTENT** law enforcement, increased resources

Most bikers are courteous and safe, community provides education

But they cannot control all - why enforcement is needed

Good behavior from all includes only riding on designated trails

Horses well trained in desensitizing, trust but no horse can be trained to be 100% "bombproof"

Equestrian advocacy in Walnut Creek Open Space - 2-year process - balance between conservation and safe usage

Stakeholders agreed on new bike flow trail, standards for shared trails, processes for requests / change in trail designation, designated nature trails

Increased signage and user education, rangers have authority to cite, will block off rogue trails, restore damage

Remember, hikers have access to all trails



EQUESTRIAN'S PERSPECTIVES (continued)

PRESENTATION 3: Amelia Marshall, EBRPD Volunteer Trail Safety Patrols

Questions who ride EBRPD trails surveyed on important issues	Asked what parks they ride in; mostly major equestrian parks	Majority agree: bikes should not be allowed on narrow trails with horses	Narrow trails: not safe or enjoyable for multi-use; not perceived as multi-use, become bike trails	Fire roads have historically worked well for bikes and horses to share; room for groups to pass each other
HS mountain biking coaches have encouraged illegal racing on trails	E-bikes are a new issue; some offensive behavior	Some classes of e-bikes are considered assistive devices for disabled, legal on all trails	Must ensure that non-disabled e-bike riders don't deny safe access; disabled also ride horses	Case for multi-use trails vs. case for separate trails: latter is way to go in new parks

PRESENTATION 4: Gary Fitts, Tilden-Wildcat Horsemen's Association

All users can and must work together	Equestrians face many threats on trails; pressing concern is trail safety	Cyclists also have issues, access most immediate concern	Way forward is collaboration between user groups	With careful planning, trail system can be both safe and accessible
Solutions: sharing, seperated traffic and more	Equestrians and bikers can support each other; examples of solutions provided	Are meeting and working together to propose collaborative solutions	email join@saferriding.org	More to discuss, hope to provide more information in email group - trail design, education, etc.



EQUESTRIAN'S PERSPECTIVES (continued)

GROUP COMMENTS

Great presentation,
thank you!

Very good
information in these
presentations, thank
you

Are any of the horse
facilities accessible to
people with
disabilities?

What is the method that
you pay for parking? Is
this at specific parking
areas within the
equestrian parks?

Our trails are popular
with users every few
yards- I go for peace
and quiet.

If everyone had a bell
going, it would be like
being in a
construction zone.

I'm not bright enough to
understand the
triangular sign at a
glance. We might think
about re-doing that...

Mutiple people agree
that trianglar sign is
confusing, often not
recognized or
understood

I was just speaking about
this with friends - let's get
some UX/UI redesign from
our tech community on this
sign! It is very hard to
understand at a glance!

How about this for a sign: ...
.....EVERYONE
YIELD TO HORSES
BIKES YIELD TO ALL OTHER
USERS ✓✓✓✓

Maybe people don't really get
"yield".....
EVERYONE SLOW OR STEP
ASIDE FOR HORSES, BIKES
STOP FOR HORSES< SLOW
FOR WALKERS

Yield sign - speak to
horses helps

Given the current climate with
law enforcement, I think it is
important to consider POC
opinions on increased law
enforcement

and whether it is a solution that is
desireable or would push people
to feel unsafe in parks.

Marie organizes this kind of
training several times a year, in
Martinez, sometimes on Mt.
Diablo and elsewhere.
Obstacle course, sensitizing
horse to this and other things.

Trial trials are a competition
where riders demonstrate how
well their horses have adapted
to all kinds of stimuli.

Those three horses
have come down to
Point Isabel for Pups
and Ponies meet-and-
grets. Very valuable

Tri-Cities Horsemen's Bomb
Proofing Playday is on May
22nd at the Radke Martinez
Shoreline Arena. Spectators
are welcome to attend!



EQUESTRIAN'S PERSPECTIVES (continued)

GROUP COMMENTS

The EBRPD 2011 Narrow Trail study noted that while it is hard to change established usage on existing trails,

it is much easier to design new trails and share usage successfully and safely.

Walnut Creek defines narrow trails as less than 8 feet, and thus bikes are excluded from almost all trails.

But bikes go on all trails, because, at least in Lime Ridge, there is basically no signage indicating bikes are not allowed.

At the start of the meeting we saw a breakdown of the percentage of trails that were open to horses but are there any statistics that shows of all trail users what percentage use horses?

District: we do not have that data that I am aware of. Most of the data is observational or word of mouth from the community on where folks like to go.

Thanks. For me this seems like a very useful thing to know because for equity purposes it might help determine how many trails should be designated as only for horses.

Unfortunately, Amelia's survey is extremely unscientific, unrepresentative at best, that was conducted on her FB Page Horse Policy East Bay,

which excluded at least one member, maybe more, who dared to express a differing viewpoint.

To the moderators, I feel like the information in this survey is a great starting point but I do not believe that this survey follows proper survey design techniques

that should be implemented to get starting point data for understanding conflicts for the group. I think it could be worth it to do a real, system wide survey

In Amelia's survey, the definition of narrow trails that people voted on had been posted there weeks earlier, but was not included as part of the survey question.

District: The challenge we face is how to collect that data scientifically and accurately given the amount of trail mileage we have.

It leads me to think the best way to determine something like that would be to engage with the community and listen.

Possibly we could marshal LOTS of volunteers to do some scientific surveys? Coordinated and managed by EBRPD, of course

Equetrians still Use Bill's Trail. An important and outspoken equestrian advocate from Marin County wrote to me recently that "Bill's Trail [on Samuel P Taylor State Park] is generally considered the gold standard to which all land managers should refer when designing multi-use trails."

This is because of about 100 pinch points that narrow the trail in places, and embedded rocks protruding above the ground at turns on the trail, making it impossible to ride quickly, as shown in the photos I took there at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/5sJPUVVUY7JYPaa18>

The award winning Ponti Ridge Trail is an area with no staging area, and no nearby stables.



EQUESTRIAN'S PERSPECTIVES (continued)

GROUP COMMENTS

Is this group's focus on unopened properties/design for new trails in areas currently not open?

Yes, focus on landbank properties or new trails in existing properties

Need clarification on what the landbank properties are

Today was full great topics. I like how everybody got to share their focus but we need more. Only five or fewer parks have been built?

I believe there is much more park usage than noted in the graph. For example, Sunol and Round Valley are heavily used by equestrians.

Six-day equestrian trail ride; all kinds of trails, only one close encounter with issues

500 equestrians on trail for multiple days w/o other incidents

Conflicts are not the dominant experience

On newly-built shared trails, both narrow and wide, for a safe and enjoyable ride, hikers and equestrians want:

Clear sight lines to see other users from afar

Pinch points, rolling dips, grade reversals to make excessive speed difficult

Grades never exceeding 10%, usually much less, to minimize gravity-fed acceleration

Education to sensitize users to the needs of other user groups

Clear signage as to what uses are allowed, and enough nearby options for bicyclists that they are not tempted to ignore that signage.

On narrow trails, occasional places to pull off to allow other users, including other equestrians

(!), to pass when going in opposite directions, or in the same direction at differing speeds

Enforcement of rules where needed.



EQUESTRIAN'S PERSPECTIVES (continued)

GROUP COMMENTS

With reference to the illegal bike racing on trails encouraged by HS coaches:

The Piedmont High School situation was addressed promptly and the coach apologized for promoting this event.

This was not a sanctioned event by the NorCal High School Cycling League and was an isolated event.

E-bikes actually very rarely if ever exceed 15 miles per hour on trails.

Where they routinely exceed other bike speeds, it is on uphill stretches. Not that I love e-bikes at all.

We clocked an e-bike going 37 mph on a city street.

I would actually rather meet a motorcycle on a trail than a bike or e-bike.

You and your horse can hear the motorcycles coming and get prepared by getting off the trail if possible and turning to face the oncoming vehicle.

You can not hear an oncoming bike or e-bike!

Lafayette Reservoir has designated times for bikes.



BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSIONS

1. What are some of the goals that equestrians have in using trails?
2. What are some of the issues that equestrians experience and/or create on trails?
3. What do you think would improve trail user experience?

Discussions focused
on solutions
(Question 3)

GROUP 1: Reporter - Scott Bartlebaugh

Planning: design items, speed slowing, pinch points, etc.

Management system with times for alternating uses

Look at flow patterns and design trails for uses

Design new trails for uses instead of just adopting what's there

Bell system is a good option

Emphasize uses in parks that would benefit those users most

Planning for trails, especially in existing parks - land use planning amendment process needs to be used

Single-use trails (bikes and horses) in addition to shared trails / designated time for uses

GROUP 2: Reporter - Helen Burke

Some disagreement re. whether trail design / management measures work

Some felt separate trails for bikes is best solution

Some feeling that bikes, equestrians and hikers on same trail don't mix

Focus on planning trails for new parks vs. looking at conflicts in existing parks

Need to look at both?

Before planning for future trails in landbank areas, need to discuss handling current trail conflicts



BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSIONS (continued)

GROUP 3: Reporter - Sean Dougan

Equestrians seeking a safe, peaceful and stress-free experience

Need horse trail brochure like bike loop brochure

Issues: casual or untrained users unfamiliar with etiquette, self-enforcement

Bad behavior, bike use increasing

Bike use higher impact than horses - faster, more focused on what you're doing rather than looking around

Solutions: signage saying horses on trail and how to interact; same with bikes

Better locks on gates, improved fencing

Trail design standards for different uses

More trails and separate trails for bikes; horses and hikers can share

Designate sections of land within parks for certain uses rather than just trails

Web of trails complicated to enforce and manage

Mitigation or permit fees for certain uses to help with increased maintenance costs, etc.

Can some parks be entirely bike-free?



BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSIONS (continued)

GROUP 4: Reporter - John Graves / Bonnie Lewkowicz

Think holistically about all uses when designing new trails or parks

Historically parks were built without many uses in mind

Create enough space at multi-use parks so there are trails for specific uses

Hope that people will follow rules, but designated trails will help reduce conflicts

In interim, need "best-of" list on District website for specific uses - what's best for horses, etc.

Would be especially helpful for new users

Even if a trail is open for horses, doesn't mean it's the best place to go with your horse

GROUP 5: Reporter - Simone Nageon de Lestang

Dispersion and better trail design could really help

Open more trails to allow dispersion for specific uses

Use more creative management techniques for excess use during COVID

Lack of education around right-of-way issues:

Not understanding the yield sign, not knowing how to interact with horses

Increasing proper management in new trails

Things that help multi-use such as sightlines, less than 10% grade

Building more trails, working collaboratively as a group with district



MISC. COMMENTS

The Bay Area Ridge Trail is a multi-use trail, that runs through most of our most popular East Bay Parks.

We would like to ensure continuity of this trail that connects East Bay Parks to the rest of the Bay Area as a sustainable, multi-use trail

If you want to celebrate trails as any type of user, please join us for Ridge to Bridges.

Unfortunately virtual this year but a great way for all user communities to come together and enjoy our beautiful trail system!

<https://ridgetrail.org/ridge-to-bridges-2021/>

NEXT STEPS

FUTURE MEETINGS

Presenter at meeting on dog walking will comment on new acquisitions related to dog walking

CA State Horsemen's working on trail ettiquette packet; would be happy to share

District: Adding July meeting to allow for additional user groups

Propose meeting June, July, August, Sept.

Hear from conservationists, youth, cultural affinity groups, dog walkers, disabled

Will reach out to user groups

Proposed schedule:
June 10 - conservationists and cultural affinity groups and youth

July 15? (disabled community and dog-owners)

August 5 (synthesis and solutions)

September 19: final meeting



NEXT STEPS

FUTURE MEETINGS (continued)

June 10th will not work for conservation community

Conservation community should have full meeting, equal amount of time

I'd like the conservationists to have the same time as bikes and horses.

Must resolve meeting schedule quickly; will meet soon and schedule, inform group

Perhaps the disabled community and dog walking advocates can put our heads together and get back to you (quickly) re:

whether we could adequately cover our info in a joint session