



Joint Statement on EBMUD trails by TWHA, NICA, BTCEB, and BARTC

We can work together. Hikers, cyclists and equestrians may have competing interests in some cases, but we have much more in common, and at least two potential conflicts can be bridged: trail safety and environmental protection. As responsible trail users, none of us want unsafe conditions, and none of us want to see our watershed environment degraded.

Equestrians, hikers and cyclists have shared trails for decades, and each accepts that it is possible to do this safely. If we make safety (rather than exclusion) our central concern, most equestrians and hikers can support sharing trails that meet safety criteria (adequate sight lines, passing options, and downhill speed controls). And, rather than asking land managers to open unsafe or degraded trails, cyclists can ask them to make these trails safer for sharing and to consider building new sustainably engineered trails where feasible.

We support proposed policy changes to the EBMUD Master Plan that would allow the Board to consider opening some unpaved trails to mountain bicycling.

Specifically, we support consideration and evaluation of opening the Eagle's Nest and Pinole Watershed sections of the Bay Area Ridge Trail to bicycles. While sections of these or future trails may be narrow, ample evidence shows that well-built and maintained single-track trails are safe and environmentally sound. We support budgeting to beginning this work as soon as possible.

We ask that the Bay Area Ridge Trail sections between Tilden and Sibley Volcanic Regional Park and between East Ridge Trail in Redwood Park and Pinehurst Road remain closed to bicycles unless and until they can be made safe for multiple user groups. However, we ask that improvements and/or alternative routing options be explored to provide long-term continuity for all trail users.

Also, we propose creating a Trail Users Committee to advise EBMUD on its trail program and Plan implementation, including trail sharing and establishing objective safety and environmental evaluation criteria, with the aim of reducing conflict and increasing cooperation and community awareness and support.

The Tilden-Wildcat Horsemen's Association has long supported shared use and has raised and donated \$250,000 to East Bay multi-use trail projects during the past decade, asking only trail safety in return.

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (BARTC) is working to create a continuous 550-mile ridgeline trail for hikers, mountain bicyclists and equestrians, and has provided grants and many volunteer stewardship days on EBMUD trails.

The National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) and the Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay (BTCEB) work to promote responsible riding, and welcome an alliance that supports the sharing of safe and environmentally secure trails. NICA and BTCEB have also contributed significant volunteer labor and resources to improve public trails in the East Bay.