

Bear Brook State Park Management Plan 2019

Listening Session - 2019 June 27

Mountain Biking User Group Perspective

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What is NEMBA?

- Our Mission: To promote sustainable and responsible mountain biking, maintain and care for the trail systems on which we recreate, and to protect and conserve open space.
- 18 New England Chapters: 4600+ members
- Our motto: “Ride the Trails / Save the Trails”

History of Mountain Biking at Bear Brook State Park

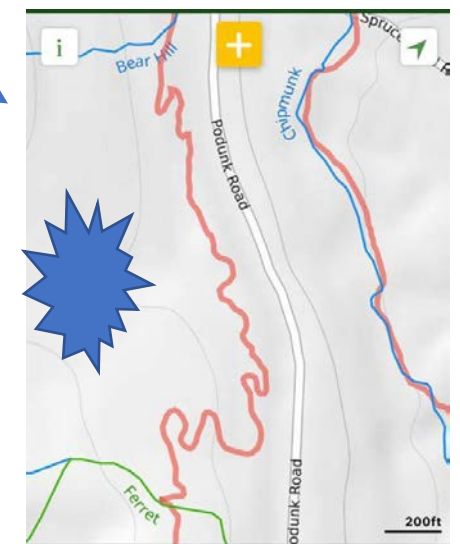
- Bicycle use in the park began when commercially available mountain bikes became available in the late 1980s
- Early use was exclusive to pre-existing roads, fire roads, XC-skiing trails and hiking trails
- Increased mountain bike popularity in the 1990s created greater demand for trails
 - Signs of trail impact and of user conflicts began to arise
- Starting in the late 1990s, NEMBA began significant trail maintenance, bridge repair/building, advocacy/education in collaboration with park management and other user groups
 - Trail development planning and implementation
 - Big Bear & Little Bear trails built in @ 2002
 - Addressed unsustainable fall-line trail sections
 - Enhanced the user experience from Hiker/Biker lot
 - “Loop Concept” trail network developed from 2013 to 2018
 - Bridges on Broken Boulder, Carr Ridge, Sentinel Pine, Hemlock



Recent and Current Trail Development at Bear Brook State Park

- In 2018 and 2019, NEMBA facilitated the re-routing and building of five new trails in support of the “Loop Concept” to enhance user experience in the park and address potential user conflicts

- Addition of Rabbit and Raptor Trails along northeast side of Podunk Rd
 - provide accessible loops to beginners from the Hiker/Biker lot
 - minimize equestrian/cyclist conflict (Salt Lick Trail preferred for equestrians)
 - Reduce non-motorized conflict with Podunk Rd vehicle traffic
- Re-route of southern Bear Hill Trail section from Pembroke Water Works land
 - protect sensitive species habitat
- Extension of Bear Hill Trail to reduce non-motorized conflict with Podunk Rd vehicle traffic
 - Expected traffic increase due to opening of Bear Hill Cabins
- Addition of singletrack trail to parallel Camp Trail (from Hemlock-3 to Pitch Pine)
 - Provide enhanced experience to intermediate mountain bikers
 - reduce non-motorized conflict with snomo users on Camp Trail
 - Building scheduled for 2019-2020
- Re-route of fall-line trail on Hemlock-2 that was suffering extensive erosion
- Restoration of the ‘Fitness Loop’ near the beach provides an easily accessible beginner trail
 - One mile long
 - Flat with no climbs
 - Natural wooded beauty including picturesque section along Bear Brook



Current Mountain Biking Climate at Bear Brook State Park

- Bear Brook State Park has become a “Destination” in the region, drawing riders from New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts.
 - High quality and extensive trail network
 - Trail addition and enhancements over the last 10+ years are a major contributor to popularity
 - The trail variety allows an enjoyable experience for all skill levels; from families with small children to expert riders and professional bicycle racers.
 - The expansive size of the park absorbs large numbers of users very well to minimize congestion and maintain the “wilderness” experience
 - Annual NEMBA event, Bear Brook Boogie, a fundraiser for trail projects in the park, draws riders from throughout the Northeast, from as far as Pennsylvania and New York
 - Recent Red Pine logging on Manchester Water Works property in Auburn (FOMBA) is creating higher usage at BBSP, especially in the winter
 - Relationship with park leadership and other user groups is collaborative and constructive



Future Needs for Mountain Biking at Bear Brook State Park

- Increased demand in southern region of the park
 - Greater utilization of Bear Hill Camp by mountain bikers and increased access from the southern Podunk Road lot (Candia) will create a greater demand for trails in the southern region of the park
 - Opportunity for an expanded trail network to include Manchester Water Works land, through Candia, into Auburn (Tower Hill, FOMBA) and Manchester (Rockingham rail trail network development)
 - More users in the southern region of the park can help to disburse riders and reduce congestion in the northern region
 - NEMBA suggests the consideration of creating new trails in the southern region of the park
- Winter trail use
 - Grooming for fatbiking is becoming popular at many venues
 - Private XC skiing enterprises are adding fatbiking, public land managers are allowing private non-profits to groom trails
 - NEMBA suggests the allowance of grooming on appropriate singletrack trails to address the demand and prevent user conflict with motorized winter vehicles
- eBikes
 - eBikes (bicycles with battery-powered electric-assist motors) are becoming very popular nation-wide
 - eBikes allow people with more diverse athletic skills to participate in the sport and will give greater range to the rider
 - NEMBA suggests that a park policy on eBike usage be established with appropriate public education; NEMBA can assist with outreach
- Increasing trail usage = increasing trail maintenance needs
 - NEMBA requests dedicated tool storage at Hiker/Biker lot
- Public facilities
 - NEMBA suggests improved bathroom facilities at the Hiker/Biker lot
 - NEMBA suggests a changing area at the Hiker/Biker lot



Big Picture: Future Mountain Biking at Bear Brook State Park

- Bear Brook State Park could be a mountain bike tourism destination
 - 2014 Pinkbike article and its literature survey

.... mountain bikers who destination travel spend comparable amounts per day, spend as much time and are willing to travel as far as other groups such as golfers who tourism marketers typically chase. A useful study from the Canada Tourist Commission displaying average spend and duration of average stay for all tourists (all years) shows mountain bikers coming in about average or above average on counts as compared to other summer visitors. In general the EIA's show that the profile of a typical visitor is as follows:

- *25-45 years old (approx 65-70% on a bell curve distribution with tails dropping off dramatically on each end except in Moab and Whistler where there were a significant amount of younger travellers). 19-29 year olds are generally the second largest category at approx 27%.*
- *A majority (55%) had household income levels greater than \$80,000. As a datapoint 31% of all BC outdoor recreationalists had household income levels greater than \$80,000. Mountain biking visitors were generally in line with all tourists to Canada going on guided tours (59% had incomes of greater than \$100,000)*
- *Average stay at each location 3 to 5 days (longer if the visitor is from far away; shorter if the visitor is from close by)*
- *Average spend per day \$60 - \$100 (inclusive of accoms, food, recreation, etc but exclusive of travel costs to get to a destination)*