

July 6, 2020

Dear Mayor and Council,

We very much appreciate that your council has worked to re-establish access to the trails behind Emerald for Emerald residents and the community – thank you. That issue, now resolved, had been raised several times at the previous neighbourhood BBQs and was recorded as the top priority for Emerald residents.

We are writing to raise concerns about the use of these trails by trials bikers – seemingly primarily coming from trailhead access in Rainbow. Several of us have politely and repeatedly informed trials bikers we have encountered that these trails are for non-motorized use only, and pointed out the signage that clearly indicates that (although with a very small graphic - photos attached). Despite being informed by residents and signage, the messaging is being ignored and the frequency of trials bikes use on the trails behind Emerald has increased, to the point that several residents had discussed writing to ask for increased enforcement before Mr. DeBoer's letter appeared in the June 23rd council package.

Mr. DeBoer asserts that these bikes are quiet and low-impact. In fact, you can hear them easily when they are on the trails, even from the homes of a number of Emerald residents. An additional disruption from the peaceful use of these trails in a natural environment is the smell of their exhaust which lingers and is noticeable not just briefly when they pass by. Wear and tear on the trails and the trail footprint have both increased, and trials bikes are responsible for ripping up the moss and trails when going up hills (sample photo attached).

There had also been attempts to build new unsanctioned trails off of Big Kahuna resulting in more destruction of the moss and wooden pallets littering the forest floor. We would note that trail maintenance behind Emerald is performed by many people, including Emerald residents who are walkers, runners and mountain bikers, as well as WORCA.

It is disruptive enough with the current incursions on the trails by trials bikers. If the rules were changed and they were allowed, motorized use would only increase and it is likely that other trials bikers in Whistler (and once known, likely visitors to Whistler as well) would bring their bikes to the trailheads in Emerald and Rainbow, exacerbating what is already a conflict with the values of a majority of trail users.

As mentioned above, the non-motorized symbol on the otherwise excellent trail intersection signposts are very small. It would be helpful if an additional small panel could be produced to make the non-motorized message more prominent. If RMOW staff are currently pressed for time to mount these little panels on the posts, there would be no shortage of volunteers in Emerald who could mount them as soon as they are produced.

While the 99 Trials Association may sit on the Trails Planning Working Group, that does not mean that the goal of the Working Group is to provide access and trails for the association.

Thank you also for approving Whistler's new official community plan (OCP). Under the Recreation and Leisure section, Objective 9.3.4 states that "*Non-motorized recreation and leisure experiences are preferred*" and 9.4.1 directs us to "*Ensure that recreational opportunities respect Whistler's natural environment.*" We hope that part of implementing the OCP policies will be to provide some enhanced communication and enforcement of the non-motorized use of the trails for the quiet and peaceful enjoyment of neighbourhood residents and other members of the public.

Accordingly, we ask that council:

- not entertain Mr. BeDoer's request to reverse current policy and allow trials bike use on the trails near Emerald;
- ask RMOW staff to inform Mr. DeBoer and Trials 99 that these are already closed to motorized use (including Trials bikes) and that any trials bike use is contravening the existing prohibition;
- ask RMOW staff to produce more prominent signage regarding motorized closure.

Sincerely,

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