

## HUNDREDS CROWD MEETING TO DISCUSS BOULDER MOUNTAIN BIKE ACCESS (DAILY CAMERA)

February 9, 2011

By Laura Snider



*Boulder residents Celin Serbo, 41, left, and Chad DeMoss, 36, ride their mountain bikes Dec. 16, at the Betasso Preserve. ( Jeremy Papasso )*

Pro-mountain biking and anti-mountain biking factions spent hours Wednesday night trying to sway Boulder's Open Space Board of Trustees to their point of view.

Hundreds of people crowded into the city's municipal building for the meeting -- spilling out of the council chambers and into the downstairs lobby -- for a meeting about how the trail system west of Boulder should be managed.

Last week, the open space staff released a draft management plan for the West Trail Study Area, which encompasses the land west of Broadway stretching from Linden Avenue south to Eldorado Springs Drive.

The plan recommended that mountain bikes not be allowed on existing trails in the area, though the staff did support two new connectors for mountain biking -- one that would link Eldorado Springs to Walker Ranch and another that would link Flagstaff Road to Boulder Canyon via Chapman Drive. Both of those connectors would require cooperation from other landowners.

The Boulder Mountainbike Alliance countered the staff's draft plan with its own "modest proposal" for bike access, which would include a north-south connector from Skunk Creek to Eldorado Springs.

"I do hear what everyone here is saying about user conflict," Botsy Phillips, a BMA member, told the Board of Trustees. "The reality is we're talking about such a small portion of trail that it's something that must be considered."

Phillips, and other mountain bikers, wore green shirts to the meeting, and many wore their bike helmets. Many mountain bike opponents wore green buttons that read SOS, which stands for Save Open Space.

Ruth Wright told the Board of Trustees that she supports the staff's recommendations for mountain bikes, in part because of the impact that she believes biking could have on the local ecosystem.

"You are trustees of these very, very special lands," she said. "You are the ones that need to protect the flora, the fauna, the critters -- the ones that can't protect themselves."

Those against mountain biking also argued that it can be scary or dangerous hiking on trails used by bikes, and that allowing another user group could cause the trail system to be "loved to death."

Bike advocates argued that it's unfair to exclude an entire user group and that the majority of mountain bikers are both respectful and willing to work to educate themselves on proper trail etiquette.

In all, more than 100 people signed up to speak at the meeting -- though some didn't make it until their assigned, two-minute slot -- and the Board of Trustees agreed to hear everyone out.

"We will not cut off public comment," Board Chairman Bill Briggs said to the crowd at the beginning of the meeting. "We will go until everybody drops or leaves -- it may be tomorrow."

Briggs also assured the crowd that the board would seriously consider all perspectives -- no matter what the board ultimately agrees.

"Regardless of how this West TSA plan comes out, nobody is going to get everything that they want," he said. "But I want to remind you that even if you don't get what you want, it doesn't mean that you haven't been heard."

Tonight, the Board of Trustees will discuss the draft plan, which also includes a package of recommendations from a community advisory group that worked over the last year to come to consensus on a number of issues from where dogs should be allowed to what social trails should be closed.

The board will officially weigh in on the plan at its Feb. 23 meeting. The City Council is scheduled to make the final call on the plan on March 15.

<https://www.dailycamera.com/2011/02/09/hundreds-crowd-meeting-to-discuss-boulder-mountain-bike-access/>