

BOULDER OPEN SPACE BOARD: ALLOW MOUNTAIN BIKES ON ANEMONE HILL (DAILY CAMERA)

August 17, 2011

The Boulder open space board is recommending a new trail on Anemone Hill that would be open to mountain bikes.

"This is an area of huge recreational benefit," said Open Space Board of Trustees member John Putnam. "Right now, we don't have a good opportunity for cyclists and no good trail access. Despite impacts, the benefit outweighs the potential harm."

The board recommended Wednesday night that a multi-use trail be built, but it added some stipulations, including deferring connecting trails to the Boulder Creek Path and the Fourmile Canyon area.

Three members voted to recommend a four- to five-mile bike loop with hiker-only connections on Anemone Hill.

Board member Allyn Feinberg voted against the recommendation, saying the impact and cost of a new trail would be too great. Patricia Billig voted for a bike trail in the area but said she thought the recommendation should not include a specific trail outline.

Most of those who spoke at the meeting were for the new trail access, saying the estimated five miles that would be open to mountain bikers is a small amount of the open space system.

"We're talking about five miles here," said Paul Daniel, who lives near Lefthand Canyon. "We've got a huge group of people getting a very small part of the resources. We are just asking that we be considered, too, as part of the community."

Others said creating designated trails in sustainable areas would prevent erosion from social trails.

"Anemone Hill is a mess, and I think this is a great opportunity to fix some of that mess and give a whole generation of users a better experience and improve the situation on the ground," said Walt Wehner, who lives in Boulder. "At the same time you give the bikers, who have been feeling alienated, something in this spot as a nice gesture."

In March, the Boulder City Council upheld a ban on mountain biking in the vast majority of the West Trail Study Area. The decision was part of the management plan for the open space land that lies west of Broadway and stretches from Linden Avenue south to Eldorado Springs Drive.

Now that the open space board has made a recommendation, the City Council is tentatively scheduled to discuss the subject in early September before voting on it.

In addition to the original no-bike recommendation in the West Trail Study Area management plan, a consultant came up with three path possibilities that would allow mountain bikers.

Some of the concerns about allowing mountain bikes on Anemone Hill were the effect on wildlife, sustainability of a bike trail, parking and possible conflicts with hikers and equestrians.

But board member Thomas Isaacson said a large number of people using the trail should not be viewed as a bad thing.

"Some people view popularity as a negative," he said. "It's popular, therefore we'll have parking problems; it's popular, therefore there will be conflicts. But to me, ultimately, more than anything else, popular is a good thing to strive for. When we build trails, we ought to construct trails that are attractive to folks. We should take all these bikes -- and feet and hooves -- as validation."

By Mitchell Byars

<https://www.dailycamera.com/2011/08/17/boulder-open-space-board-allow-mountain-bikes-on-anemone-hill/>