

## **BOULDER MOUNTAIN BIKE ADVOCATE REVOKES, THEN GIVES BACK AWARD TO OPEN SPACE 'HERO' (DAILY CAMERA)**

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### **Boulder Mountainbike Alliance Hero Award**

The BMA Hero Award is given in recognition of people who work on behalf of responsible recreational access to public lands. Past recipients of the award include:

**2011** — Mike Lamb, Boulder Parks and Recreation construction manager for the Valmont Bike Park

**2010** — Will Toor, Boulder County commissioner

**2009** — Ed Perault, U.S. Forest Service Boulder Ranger District recreation supervisor

**2008** — Mike Patton, director of Boulder's Open Space and Mountain Parks Department

Calling it an “infantile” move, the president of the Boulder Mountainbike Alliance said Tuesday he’s sorry — sort of — that he recently took back an award the organization gave to Boulder’s director of Open Space and Mountain Parks.

The alliance, a nonprofit group that advocates for mountain bike access on local trails, gave its annual "BMA Hero Award" to open space director Mike Patton in 2008.

According to the organization, the award recognizes a person who "works tirelessly on behalf of responsible recreational access to our public lands" and who "goes beyond the call of duty in recognizing the benefits of recreation to our entire community."

But Jason Vogel, president of the Mountainbike Alliance, took the award back on Oct. 27 — two days after the City Council voted not to allow mountain bikes on a planned trail on the city's Anemone Hill open space. It was also the day that Councilman Macon Cowles set off a firestorm among the mountain biking community by sending a group of cyclists an email in which he dismissed as "a bunch of s-t" their complaints over the council's vote.

"I asked (Patton) to return it and went to his office," Vogel said.

A secretary handed over the award, which is made out of bicycle parts.

Vogel said he was emotional about the city once again denying bike access to property in the West Trail Study Area. The council earlier this year decided against allowing bikes in the vast majority of the study area, which consists of 11,250 acres of open space west of Broadway.

In an email to Patton, Vogel said he would "hold the Hero award in a safe place" and return it "once we've re-established a working relationship."

"If you can help find a way to rebuild the relationship that was damaged through the West TSA, you will deserve the Hero award more than when we gave it (to) you in 2008," he wrote.

On Tuesday, Vogel said he was acting on his own and without authorization of the Boulder Mountainbike Alliance's board of directors. He said he gave the award back to Patton a few days later, after he had a chance to calm down.

"It was an infantile thing to do to take the award back," he said. "I think it was in the aftermath of a very emotional time. I personally spent about four years of my life working on the West TSA."

He said the mountain biking community is frustrated and concerned about the ability to communicate with the city's open space staff "in a collaborative way."

Patton was not in his office Tuesday and did not respond to emails and phone calls seeking comment.

Vogel said he's sorry about his actions, "insofar as they may cast a negative light on the mountain biking community."

But he said he stands behind the message he was trying to send, and he hopes his actions will at least spur a conversation about the need to repair the relationship between the city and mountain bikers.

“The mountain biking community is a valid and constructive group of open space and public lands advocates and volunteers, and the future of our relationship largely rests in Mike Patton’s hands,” he said.

Dean Paschall, the open space department’s manager of public process and communications, disagreed that the department has been butting heads with mountain bikers recently.

“I don’t see us at odds at all,” he said.

He described the city’s relationship with the mountain biking community as “good” and said the staff is working to find potential regional trail connections for cyclists.

<https://www.dailycamera.com/2011/11/15/boulder-mountain-bike-advocate-revokes-then-gives-back-award-to-open-space-hero/>