



MOUNTAIN BIKING AND THE WEST TSA

What do mountain bikers want?

- Mountain bikers want to share in the open space experience that binds all Boulder residents together – including trails that go through forests and trails with views of the flatirons.
- We want to be able to recreate from our homes, with our families and without our cars, just like our neighbors who choose to hike.
- We want to feel welcomed as part of the Boulder open space community. We are not caricatures – we are responsible Boulder citizens who are solutions-oriented and want to be treated as such.
- We want to be treated as an asset for the open space program. The enthusiasm, volunteerism, and political support exhibited by the mountain biking community should be leveraged by OSMP for the betterment of our public lands. We want to be viewed as part of the solution, not part of the problem.

The BMA vision

- We want a baseline of access that can serve for generations while increasing the sustainability of the open space system as a whole. This is a very achievable goal, and we have a vision for how to accomplish it.
- We do not want City of Boulder open space to become a “destination” for mountain bikers. There is little chance of Boulder becoming another Moab, Crested Butte, Salida, or Fruita for mountain biking. We should manage mountain bike access primarily to serve the Boulder community and its neighborhoods.
- We believe that mountain bike access should be managed to minimize conflict and maximize opportunities for a fossil-fuel-free recreation experience. This can be achieved by providing modest access on trail from the city core to shared use trail systems with lower user density to the north (Boulder Valley Ranch), south (Marshall Mesa/Doudy Draw), east (Teller Farms/White Rock), and west (Walker Ranch/Betasso/USFS lands).
- We want families, neighbors, and city residents to be able to recreate where they live in support of Boulder’s sustainability goals and in recognition of the realities imposed by the future carbon constrained world. Bikes will only become more the norm under such a future.
- We believe that the majority of near-town trails should remain hiker only so those who prefer a hiking-only experience have many options.

BMA West TSA requests in support of this vision

- We request a southern extension of the Foothills Trail to access Doudy Draw from Baseline Road. The Foothills Trail southern extension should include connections to south and central Boulder neighborhoods, so local residents and kids can start their open space experience from home. OSMP has fee interest in or management agreements for lands that allow it to make such a connection a reality in the near term.
- We request a near-town loop trail south of the Shanahan trails. The recreation experience is improved for everyone when a loop is involved. It cuts in half the number of people that you have to interact with and provides a near-town recreation opportunity for children, young families, the elderly, and people without enough time to complete a longer distance ride. The area south of the Shanahan trails is also distant enough from the high-user-density trails immediately next to Boulder neighborhoods that shared use trails could work well.

- We request well-designed trails that maximize the quality of the user experience and minimize conflict. BMA is prepared to say no to access that will increase conflict and reflect poorly on the mountain biking community. State-of-the-art trail design and user management can address most of the issues that will be faced by adding limited bike access to the user mix in the West TSA. However, BMA believes that thoughtful work by professionals will be needed to ensure success. While BMA generally supports shared-use trails because it minimizes impacts to the environment, we have heard significant and reasonable concerns from the community about shared-use trails in the West TSA. Because of this, BMA remains open to a variety of management techniques, up to and including, separate use trails.
- We request trail access from Red Rocks Park over Anemone Hill to connect to Betasso Preserve. Currently, riding from town requires cyclists to jockey with cars on Boulder Canyon Drive. This is a dangerous and unpleasant experience. Because OSMP does not currently have fee interest in all lands necessary to make this connection, we do not believe that granting such access is a meaningful gesture to the mountain biking community at this time.
- We request trail access from Eldorado Canyon State Park to Walker Ranch. Because OSMP has previously agreed to such a connector, because it requires the coordination of three land management agencies, and because the trail would be very expensive to build, we do not believe that granting such access (again) is a meaningful gesture to the mountain biking community at this time.
- We request trail access along or parallel to Chapman Drive. This would provide a partial off road option to access Walker Ranch from town instead of riding up Flagstaff Road – a dangerous and sometimes unpleasant experience. But because OSMP does not currently have fee interest in all lands necessary to make this connection, we do not believe that granting such access is a meaningful gesture to the mountain biking community at this time.
- BMA remains committed to partnering with OSMP to make limited and reasonable bike access in the West TSA a success. We have previously shared our menu of options for successful trail system design and effective management of mountain biking. We are happy to continue to provide this expertise. In the mean time, we would point curious parties toward the best published resource on the topic: *Managing Mountain Biking* which can be purchased on line here <http://www.imba.com/catalog/book-managing-mountain-biking> or at 207 Canyon Drive, Suite 301, Boulder, CO 80302.

BMA is committed to supporting this vision

- BMA will gladly donate time and support expert professionals in the planning, design, and management of new shared use trails and mountain biking opportunities. We believe that the enthusiasm and resources that BMA can bring to bear should be used to reduce conflict and improve the environmental sustainability of the West TSA trail system as a whole.
- We will use our cadre of trained and experienced trail crew leaders to provide the organization and people power to build new trails or reroute unsustainable trail segments. BMA has contributed over \$500,000 worth of trail care volunteerism since 1991. But we've never had a more experienced, committed, or professional set of trail crew volunteers than we have today.
- BMA will gladly help OSMP to manage new mountain bike access through peer-to-peer education, utilizing our extremely successful Boulder Mountain Bike Patrol and our social networks and institutional relationships. Such peer-to-peer outreach efforts can help effectively manage trail user expectations, enhance etiquette, reduce conflict, and provide real-time feedback on management issues to OSMP.

Signed on behalf of the BMA Board of Directors
 Jason Vogel, BMA President, October 8, 2010
<http://www.bouldermountainbike.org/>