



The Honorable Charlie Hales
Mayor of Portland
1221 SW 4th Avenue,
Room 110,
Portland, OR 97204

RE: River View Natural Area

Dear Mayor Hales,

We are writing to express our concern with the recent decision to prohibit bicycle use in the River View Natural Area. Any decision to exclude bicycles is disappointing to our organizations as we truly believe that bicycles are an amazing tool for progress. They provide efficient and cost effective transportation, a family friendly form of recreation, and in the case of off road bicycling, a valuable connection to the natural environment. Yet despite that passion we know that sometimes other priorities for funding or even land use take precedence and bicycles are not given priority. We can generally accept those decisions. However, when those decisions are made in an arbitrary and capricious manner that cuts off due process, we must object.

The decision to prohibit bicycle access at River View Natural Area was made with little notice while the planning process was still on going. Cutting a public process short dishonors those citizens who have volunteered their time to their community. It undermines the professional input of the technical advisory committee. Most of all, it disregards the spirit of due process that we expect of government at all levels.

Beyond the procedural concerns, this decision shows an inconsistent application of standards and disregard for reliance on scientific evidence. In their response letter dated March 2, 2015 Commissioners Fritz and Fish stated that "PP&R and BES will be limiting activities at RVNA from now on to *passive* nature-based recreation uses." (emphasis added) However, in the Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan bicycling is included as passive recreation and off-road bicycling is also allowed in the Powell Butte Natural Area. Moreover, the offered explanation for the prohibition cited environmental/ecosystem concerns without any scientific evidence that bicycle use has a negative effects also leads us to question the merits of this decision.

As a consolation Commissioners Fish and Fritz advised off-road bicycling advocates to support the budget request for \$350,000 to develop a Citywide Off-Road Cycling Plan. That budget request was denied¹, leaving Portland's off-road cycling community with a shortage of local trails and no governmental mechanism to improve the situation. This systematic pattern of issue avoidance has repeated itself in Portland for too many years.

¹ At the time of sending this letter the Portland City Budget Office had not included the Citywide Off-Road Cycling Plan in its recommendation. The Commissioners still have the opportunity to include it in their final decision.



We request that Portland Parks and Recreation, Bureau of Environmental Services, and any other city agency that administers public lands collaborate with the North West Trails Alliance and other local off-road bicycling advocates to develop a strategy to address the shortage of off-road bicycling opportunities in the city of Portland. We look forward to Portland living up to its status as a progressive thought leading city that embraces bicycling in all forms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael Van Abel'.

Michael Van Abel
President and US Executive Director
International Mountain Bicycling
Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jenn Dice'.

Jenn Dice
Vice President Government Affairs
People for Bikes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Andy Clark'.

Andy Clark
President
League of American Bicyclists