



## Bringing Beginner Singletrack to Ashland (and Getting Kids Back to Nature!)

APRC Recreational Goals Meeting 2/11/19

## Nature Deficit Disorder

- The average American child spends 4 to 7 minutes a day in unstructured play outdoors, and **over 7 hours a day in front of a screen.**\*

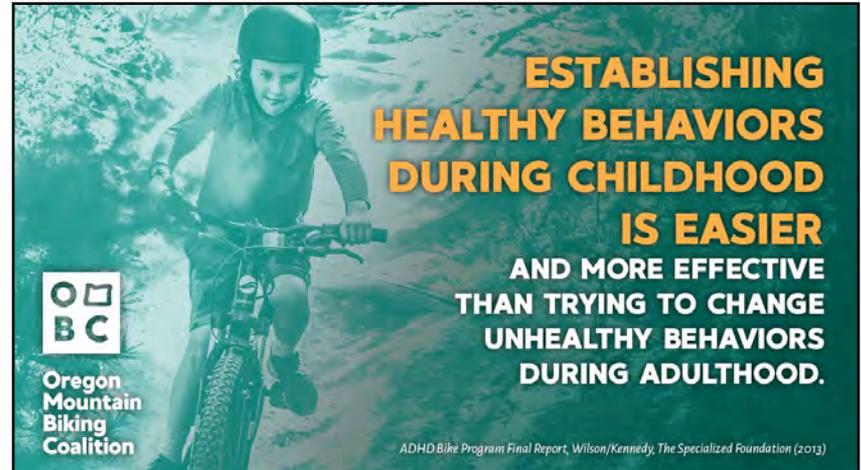
\*"Why Kids Need to Spend Time in Nature", Child Mind Institute

## Why Play Outside

- It gets kids moving
- It builds confidence
- It promotes creativity and imagination—you can see, hear, smell, and touch outdoor environments
- Researchers agree: kids who play outside are smarter, happier, more attentive, and less anxious than kids who spend more time indoors.

\*Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*

## How Can We Get Kids Outside And Into Nature?



## What's wrong with existing MTB trails?

- Much too difficult
  - Like skiing Mt Ashland without Sonnet or Comer
- Hard to access without driving
- Unlikely to happen without direct parental involvement

## I thought you guys wanted a pump track?

We do!

Symbiotic relationship

- A. Pump track builds skills
- B. Beginner trail lets kids take those skills onto real singletrack *while* getting them into nature

## Communities are recognizing the value in trails.

"Trails used to be seen as something communities had to 'deal' with. Trails are now seen as the 21st century version of ball fields. If you don't have a mountain bike trail system, you're probably not part of the 21st century."

Rich Edwards

IMBA Trail Solutions Director of Construction and Operations

## Communities are recognizing the value in trails.

- Grants Pass spending \$2 million on Dollar Mountain trail network
- Coos County spending another \$150,000 on Mtn biking trails
- City of Klamath and local trail assn. are working together to make the area a Mtn biking destination
  - Spence Mtn, Moore Mtn, Brown Mtn, Klamath Ridgeview Trail, 150+ mi Great Klamath Circle Trail



**OAKRIDGE,**  
**A SMALL TOWN OF 3,200,**  
**SEES 35,000 MOUNTAIN BIKERS**  
**EACH YEAR THAT SPEND**  
**\$2.3-\$4.9**  
**MILLION**

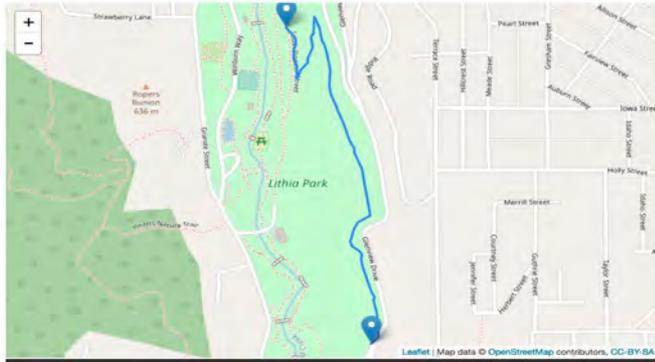
**OMBC**  
**Oregon Mountain Biking Coalition**

Meltzer, N. (2014) The Impacts of Mountain Bike Tourism in Oakridge, Oregon

## The ideal Ashland beginner trail would be:

- Close to town
  - No driving necessary
  - No parents necessary (appeals to kids and parents alike)
- Low angle
  - An easy climbing trail (multi-use ok)
  - An easy downhill MTB only trail
  - Would allow kids and beginners to play and hone skills
- Would serve as a gateway to the watershed trails for kids and adults
  - Would give beginners a safe place to ride while giving experienced riders a road-free way to access watershed

The ideal Ashland beginner trail would be:



Outer Lithia checks all the boxes!

- ✓ Close to town
- ✓ Low angle for easy up and down
- ✓ Perfect location to serve as a gateway to the watershed trails for kids—*and* adults

What's there now?

Homeless  
Camps



Poison Oak



More Homeless Camps



### A QUICK CHECK FOR YOUR FLOW TRAIL PROJECT

To check your flow trail project before you build it, we've put together a quick check to know if you're on a good way to a sustainable trail or if you should rethink some aspects first. This check does not replace any planning or design work, but we hope it helps to share some of our experience. Just follow these steps:

**1. WHAT IS THE ELEVATION AT THE STARTING POINT ?**

In meters above sea level,

A: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. WHAT IS THE ELEVATION AT THE END POINT ?**

In meters above sea level,

B: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. WHAT IS THE TRAIL'S PLANNED DISTANCE?**

In meters,

C: \_\_\_\_\_

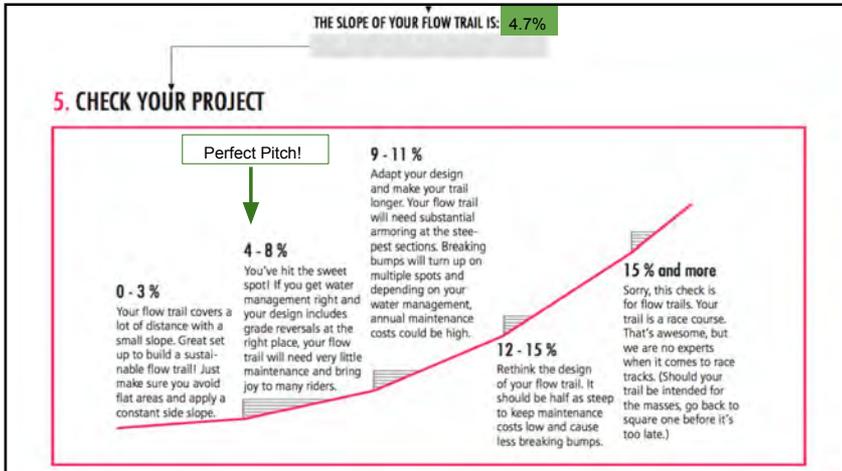
**4. DO THE MATH!**

$$(A-B) / D \times 100\%$$

THE SLOPE OF YOUR FLOW TRAIL IS:

$$D=(C-(A-B))^{1/2}$$

$$185 \text{ ft elevation loss} / 3854 \text{ ft} = 4.7\% \text{ grade}$$



## Objections: Why not use Pioneer St.?

- It doesn't accomplish the goals of:
  - A. Getting kids onto singletrack and into the woods
  - B. Getting riders off the street (doesn't go anywhere)
  - C. It's not mountain biking

## Objections: That area of Lithia is already being used.

- Won't impact existing users
- Under-utilized compared to the rest of the park
- Observed only five (legal) users in 8+ hours!

## Strava Heatmap--Runners & Hikers



## How are Mtn Bikers getting to/from watershed trails now?



## Two small trails with many benefits

- Do it for the kids—but also for the adults
- Gets Mtn Bikers off the road
- Also gets drivers off the road
- Safer, reduces driver conflicts, more people ride from town (great for business!)
- Less carbon pollution

## Added benefit

More active users in East Lithia = fewer homeless camps in East Lithia

## Ok, how much is this going to cost?

- Average trail building cost for machine built downhill = \$7 per linear ft.\*

$$\$7 \times \sim 4,000\text{ft} = \$28,000$$

Morgan Benbough, Vice President Alpine Bike Parks

- “Ashland desperately needs this. I’ll do it for \$9999.”

Jake Contreras (Builder of Lizard and Jabberwocky II)

- Uphill trail hand-built by volunteers. Aka free!

The real question is how much is this going to save?



**MOUNTAIN BIKING  
SAVES OREGON**

**\$26 MILLION**

**ANNUALLY IN HEALTH  
CARE COSTS.**

**OM  
BC**  
Oregon  
Mountain  
Biking  
Coalition

(Rosenberger, 2018)



**EVERY \$1 SPENT  
ON TRAILS LED TO  
\$2.94 IN DIRECT  
MEDICAL BENEFIT.**

**OM  
BC**  
Oregon  
Mountain  
Biking  
Coalition

A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Physical Activity Using Bike/Pedestrian Trails, Wang, C., et al., (2004)

It's time to recognize  
Ashland for what it is:  
The mountain biking capital of  
Southern Oregon

It's time to recognize MTB trails for  
what they are:

Hugely beneficial to the health,  
happiness and wellbeing of Ashland  
residents and visitors alike.

The Outer Lithia Trail would solve two  
critical issues by providing low-angle  
beginner terrain, plus road-free  
access to the watershed.